

SLEAZOID EXPRESS



**SPECIAL ISSUE:
THE BIOGRAPHY OF JOEL M. REED
DIRECTOR OF “BLOODSUCKING FREAKS”
...or “Games Con Men Play”**

SLEAZOID EXPRESS

ISSUE SEVEN

SPECIAL ISSUE: THE BIOGRAPHY OF JOEL M. REED

DIRECTOR OF “BLOODSUCKING FREAKS”

P.O. Box 620
Old Chelsea Station
New York, New York 10011
USA
www.sleazoidexpress.com

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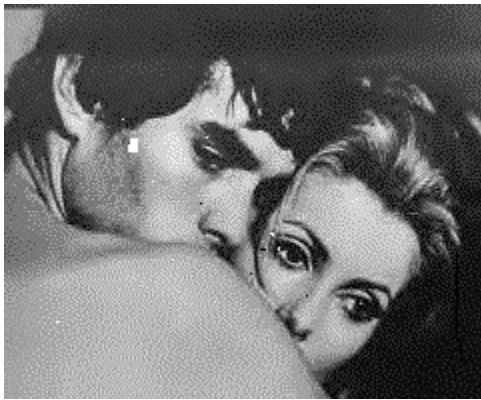
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I still love you, Michelle – Bill xxxxxxxx

Mr. DJ – Please play *If Lovin’ You is Wrong I Don’t Wanna Be Right* and *Wild Horses* for Michelle from Bill



THANK YOU FROM BILL:

My legal counselor and good friend Art Ettinger and his terrific lady, Allana Sleeth
My friends who were always there for me: Don Edmonds; Mindy Robinson; and
Mrs. Nicky Miller of the United Kingdom. Congrats, Nicky, it's a boy and on all the progress you've made.
*Mr. DJ – Please play **You Wear It Well** and **Ooh La La** by Rod Stewart for Nicky Miller*
And to my brilliant web designer and dear friend – Secret Agent Mark Welton of the United Kingdom.

**Games Con Men Play:
The Biography of JOEL M. REED
Director of *Bloodsucking Freaks*
(or... “Where’s the Movie?”)
by
“Michelle Clifford and Bill Landis”**

Act I: Location in Everything

Joel M. Reed’s apartment is ensconced in the elegant Carnegie Hall area of New York City. A stone’s throw from world famous Central Park. A swank location, Reed’s neighborhood is still imparted with a feeling of old style New York wealth. In the film *Midnight Cowboy* it was felt as Mecca to Joe Buck and Ratso Rizzo as a temple of affluence and easy living.

Past the doormen the area provides a cloak for many a shady business to hide under. Nefarious cosmetic surgery doctors who advertise on the subways, a “temp agency” that gets strippers gigs and pays them by the week, an answering service linked to escort services. The area is home to literally hundreds of outcall whore agencies. Dozens of in house prostitution apartments. Mail drops. Streetwalkers who work businessmen near the Hilton and Warwick Hotels. At one point, the West 50s housed two gay theaters: The David and the 55th Street Playhouse. They were furthest from Times Square with a clientele wanting discretion. Hustlers and con artists who work the west 50’s circuit take a shared pride in that their area address gives a glitzy image that helps trap the mark into spending a little bit more than a Deuce trick. Location is everything in Manhattan.

Since Reed had a good address it naturally led people to believe he perhaps lead a prosperous life. Marks would believe he was capable of floating that nice address. He obtained the apartment when the rent controlled one he lived at in Times Square on filthy decrepit 48th Street was ripped down in the late 1970s. Reed was luckily re-located by his landlord to a better address at 120 West 58th Street, Apartment “8-B as in bondage,” as he’s fond of describing it. In late 1981 his rent was about \$380 a month for a one bedroom in a building that could have easily rented on the open market for \$1000. The Reagan era thus began. The decade that saw greed became holy. The building was subsequently renovated by status conscious Yuppies and went co-op. They installed a ritzy doorman, moving Reed a wee bit higher in the financial façade department.

Inside his rent controlled hamster cage a man who looks composed of a putty blob of tired jowl slumps. Two Civil War swords hang over his threadbare couch. A small framed poster of a failed one night Off-Off-Broadway production by Reed titled *The End Of All Things Natural* hangs just over his shoulder. A hideous oil painting provides a memento of his last producer Lorin Price. In this very presentable building on West 58th Street, within this paeon to luxury, Reed crouches in wait ready to take off any mark that wants entry to the Fantasy world of Film.

Most of Reed’s days are dull, running on metronome. He wakes up and hopes for a shit. Today the same as yesterday but with the possibility of tomorrow. He sits in an unkempt apartment full of filthy laundry, a space carved out for the computer and his well thumbed old-fashioned scrapbook from the 1950’s. Black cardboard covered, this is his clippings display, a sort of libretto to his non career. Photos of Reed in a karate class he used as proof of his Korean War service. He was chubby. No serviceman physique. There were no military uniform pictures. No surprise. A requisite film director photo of him at an editing table, purposefully posed. Still chubby. An old photo of a well off businessman he’d known for years, who was an importer of sweatshop made housewares. A photo of a one-time coworker, a teenage girl whose movement in the photo seems to be one of avoidance. The kind of photo someone takes without asking. Aged yellowed *Variety* announcements, a clipping of an unfavorable review of *The Incredible Torture Show*, clippings of ads of *The Incredible Torture Show* playing on a double bill in Watts, California with HG Lewis’ *Gore Gore Girls*. The appeal and marketing to the grindhouse audience was that they were X rated horror. Promising something more severe than an R. Another clipping from a Compton ghetto drive in revealed a double header of Reed’s film *Incredible Torture Show* with Ted Mikel’s *The Corpse Grinders*, one of the most laughable cheap horror films ever made. The clippings pickings were thin. There was a photo from the set of Reed’s film *Night of the Zombies* with hardcore actor Jamie Gillis taken on faggot filled Christopher Street circa 1979. Gillis is holding in Reed his arms in an appalling Pieta stance.

It would have been commercially wiser for Reed to include a still of Gillis with a girl, but his lack of talent knows no bounds and the aim of his movies is to *fail*. He's an ugly narcissist, like Coffecakes in *A Bronx Tale*.

This memory book was not filled with many pages, the majority empty. Waiting for someone or something to fill the void. And since there's a sucker born every minute the farthest Reed needed to wander outdoors is to the coffee shop downstairs. His phone doesn't ring much. If it does, the answering machine will screen out the IRS or a pesky company making their last demand for payment. But occasionally there are those lucky days when his phone rings and on the other end is a curious, naïve man ready to invest some money to make the fetish of his life come true via film producing the exploitation movie of his dreams. The man calling is suddenly offered the chance to take part in an exciting adventure. A magic carpet ride propelled by a man who made an infamous kink movie. *Bloodsucking Freaks*, as *Incredible Torture Show* is now known, a nerd treasure for those who enjoy tormenting women. A butterfly is caught in a net. Money will be exchanged shortly. Reed had reason to smile on those days.

The majority of the business of exploitation film is pure evaporated hot air. A means to an end: to part investors from their money and not ultimately make any movie. Director Joel M. Reed is a most grotesque embodiment of this back alley shit heeled showbiz shell game.

Exploitation Film is a field noted for prolific filmmakers. Reed has only made six movies in almost four decades. He would like you to forget he hasn't made a film in 26 years. Yet he gathers investors for unmade films to this day. Showbiz is made of dreams. Dreams are ubiquitous. Reed is here to scam off of that ubiquity. Here's how he does it.



*Director Joel M. Reed at work,
A publicity shot to attract certain investors*

Joel M. Reed is an 8th grade dropout. Instead of studying books, he studied human nature. He spent his childhood moving out of apartments in the middle of night because his father couldn't pay the rent. The father couldn't hold a job, and often said to Youngman Joel, "let's go to the movies and get away from everything, son."

The long con was Reed's specialty, as gigs go. His involvement in a variety of seedy and sordid activities keeps him afloat. When he's found a profitable target, his stock rises with his other unsavory activities, and he can milk them for all they're worth. Reed could even surprise himself at how far the long con would go, as he operates in multiples of \$10,000. He cultivates his solvent marks over time and then abruptly closes down the "company" when the well is dry. Reed has a sense of drive, like any feral animal needing meat. He'd play his con game on any susceptible mark. That was his purpose in life, an action that can have a severe reaction in the victim, including suicidal self-hateful thoughts. Reed would scam despite the consequences to the victim to keep himself alive. Darwin lives.

In the process of his manipulation of the dreamers he hurts, he collects information for their files - enough, usually smarmy and sexual about his marks to blackmail them into keeping quiet when he breaks them later. It's most easy for Reed when it's strictly in an introverted mark's head. When people are taken for money, they are ashamed and enraged. They feel like fools. Less than smart. Or it couldn't have happened to them. Victims of a rapist theology. *Let 'em call the police...I dare them. They look like a fucking mess. They'll feel like fuckin' dumb bitches. The District Attorney will challenge if they brought it on themselves.* Why bother. The money is gone. The mark is most times ruined financially. Not even knowing they were conned, they are instead left to feel like failures. A worse spiritual fate. That leaves the door open to self-doubt. Could I have prevented it? *Did I bring it on myself?*

After a point in 1976, Joel M. Reed was known and pursued because he made an obscure S&M film, so he knew he was dealing with marks with a kinky mentality that'd also be drawn to collecting bondage movies. Reed attracted people who wanted to delve deeper into their own dream world. At the time that they meet him they feel too separate and self conscious to join into any S&M scene. They need a hand holder. A walker. The fact that Reed's movie, *The Incredible Torture Show*, was so obscure was also fascinating to the obsessive kinky film collector because it was the first time in years the notorious Stan Borden, distributor of the *Olga* film series, had come out with any new releases.

Sometimes after a couple of drinks too many, Reed would reminisce about his family, and horrid stories would emerge like farts in an elevator. His hatred for women would emerge full blown. Reed would describe his mother as "nothing but a dumb cunt who bothered my dad." He recalled running away to Texas as a kid and homosexual tendencies would reveal themselves: "A bunch of guys got me drunk in the YMCA and I woke up with a sore ass." What would he be doing in Texas? Working the bus station circuit tricking with horny cowboy bus station trade? Wishful thinking. Reed is too unattractive. Many times he would display self-hate, saying that he was "half WASP" or "half Jewish". Depending on whom he was speaking to. Many criminals replace their sex drive for the crime of their specialty. Reed would become sexless as the years went on, and he scammed harder. The scam was the sex act. The money aroused him.

Then what was Reed's personal vice? Everyone has one. He certainly wasn't a churchgoing teetotaler so there had to be *something*. As just mentioned, he had a eunuch quality and didn't seem to pop for outcall boys - especially not when he could talk some naïve actor into bed with the promise of a part. He claimed to "like cocaine" because "that's what all the big directors in Hollywood do" - although there was never any evidence of Reed buying or using drugs. He had an alcoholic inclination, easily able to polish off a bottle of wine on someone's tab during dinner, but wasn't a falling down drunk. He's worked hard all his life never to have a job, so one assumes the money goes on living expenses. But his shabby appearance, sudden disappearance of huge amounts of money, and his practiced act of playing broke made one suspect that Reed's personal obsession was gambling. Not merely playing an occasional long shot at an Off Track Betting Parlor, but going to the races or dealing with bookies. His interest in horseracing is revealed toward the end of this sordid tale. Reed seemed to know all too well what a bookie's collection agents were capable of... which only gave Reed more gumption to victimize marks who were drawn to him by exploitation film.

Returning to his dysfunctional family situation, Reed said he had two brothers, one supposedly a successful executive at NBC and another shy guy who worked for the phone company who had married a secretary. The NBC brother wouldn't speak to him any longer. This successful brother had actually done production work on Reed's initial cinematic opus and there was a really serious rift between them. They weren't on speaking terms any more. One would assume the well of money for "loans" to sibling Joel had run dry long ago. He paid a yearly visit to his Ma Bell employee brother out in Queens, no doubt to act pathetic and broke, play on the guy's guilt and pick up a few bucks.

Reed's father ended up working on the Deuce at the old King Karol Records on 42nd Street as a cashier. Reed would at first act sympathetic that his father worked at such a low paying job. Joel was not about to hold any wage slave gig so he was not above hitting the old geezer up for what little cash he earned at the record shop. Reed would show up at his father's job that was next to the X rated Bryant Theater. He'd enter the store and harangue the oldster for cash. He'd demand money for the ubiquitous "last piece of his rent" Reed was a known deadbeat. The proverbial crumb bum that owes everyone and their brother.

The actual jobs Reed has held are few and far between. He claims to have spent time in the Army during Korea. Supposedly in supply requisitions. He boasted it made it easy for him to boost things to sell on the black market. *Thief*. Reed has always maintained the credibility of a man who would work the Miami cockroach races.

In the 1950s, Reed was one of many exploitation guys to briefly work as press agent for Paramount. Or MGM, depending whom he was telling this story to. This experience gave Joel his handy skill of how to call gossip columns like *New York Post's Page Six* or make announcements to the showbiz weekly *Variety*, a technique that would become useful later when his desperate auteurism would turn to scamming. In the early 1960s Joel peeled a shystie eye towards advertising. He claimed that he got the job by dating the boss' daughter. The woman he refers to is the same co-worker seen avoiding his camera in his *Memory book*. He comes on as heterosexually powerful to an insecure mark, when in reality, what's left of any sexual feeling is homosexual. Reed is gay. Reed claimed he did nothing at the ad agency but sit in the coffee shop below its office each morning in "brainstorming" meetings.

In tenderloin criminal parlance, someone you refer to as your *father* is the person who took you on as a protégé in the vice world. A man Reed said was "like a father to me," Eddie Jaffe, was part of the sub-*Hollywood Babylon* strata that Reed drifted through in the late 50's. Jaffe's pathetic claim to fame was supposedly being Marlon Brando's roommate during Brando's early days as a desperate acting student in NYC. Jaffe was a known Times Square chickenhawk who enjoyed underage runaways sleeping on his floor. It was Jaffe who snapped the infamous blowjob photo of Brando giving head. A hard cock in Marlon's mouth when he was at his most financially needy and desperate.

When the advertising gig flamed out, Reed became a bottom feeder in the world of sexploitation movies. Joe Sarno started throwing him small bones, little jobs on his productions. Considered a pioneering genius by some, an untalented hack by others, Sarno had been making softcore movies since the early 60s. Sarno was prolific with titles like *Sin You Sinners*, knew the ins and outs of exploitation well and had no trouble when the softcore format was made to turn into shabby hardcore videos.

Sarno gave Reed the job of production manager, the man or woman on a porn set who gives out the checks to actors - with considerable grief. Production managers try to keep the check as long as possible. They try to get more work out of the actor "just a couple more scenes, just a couple more scenes." They're used as a smoke screen for an unethical director who would rather pocket that check than pay the cast. Most production managers have an outright contempt for actors.

Reed was grateful for his introduction to this thieving on the set aspect of exploitation movies and was happy to perform the smoke screen function for Sarno. Sarno could hide behind Reed and keep his own reputation clean while Reed would take the abuse and insults. Reed has no shame. When people would spread the bad word and it would get back to Reed, he'd make up lies about the person he'd stolen from, usually, sexually tinged to deflect the accusations.

Will it and it is not a dream. Joel Reed's directorial career started in 1968 when Reed was living in a cheap filthy Times Square apartment on West 48th Street between Broadway and 6th Avenue. A residential building incongruously plopped amidst offices. Reed had always wanted to be a big shot despite his thimble of talent. In 1969, Sarno saw that Reed was so effective at being a thief he rewarded him by putting him in the director's seat. Sarno would have to wind up helping Reed finish this film, *Career Bed* because Reed spent the money allotted for the film on his rent and personal expenses instead of completing the film.

Sarno then turned Reed onto film distributors Peppercorn-Wormser, which consisted of two cranky but affable old men who released everything from soft porn to *Mondo Magic*. They took on *Career Bed*. Sarno took his cut back when Peppercorn-Wormser gave Reed completion funds. *Career Bed* was a softcore black and white movie that starred hardcore porn actresses and prostitutes Jennifer Welles and Georgina Spelvin using other names. They were, of course, stiffed out of pay by Joel, but were grateful for exposure in what was described to them as a "legitimate" movie, not a mere one day wonder loop gig. Lied to that "it would be real acting stuff".

The plot of *Career Bed* was a rehash of one of Reed's favorite salty stories he'd bring up to lubricate the wallets of middle aged gullible investors. In at least one play out of the scam, it involved a stage mother pimping her daughter to producers and directors to further the kid's career. Freudian slips about Reed's private nature occur in the film's threadbare plot. A well known actor attempts to hide his latent homosexuality by pursuing the daughter. A character who is an agent turns out to be, in reality, a pimp. Had Reed once been a pimp – white ones are always hags and messes – and just had never been able to hold it together? One never knows. The vile luridness of the stage mother/daughter verbal pornography in itself seemed a likely enough fantasy for Reed's level of investor. This yarn that Reed spun enabled him to crack a few wallets open many times over. Spelvin and Welles were eager to get the production started and threw in free sex for the investors to oil its squeaky wheels. The film itself is ugly in intention, statically and forebodingly shot, and malevolent. A true piece of misogyny – something Reed would take as a *compliment*.

Reed embellished his retelling of making *Career Bed* to future investors with raunchy stories. He said he and Sarno would get head from Jennifer Welles together. Let's suspend the homosexual implications of two men sharing a woman in this fashion for a second. Reed is a fag who had no use for women except as pawns. Reed maliciously enjoyed learning that the little Hispanic fellow on the set was Jennifer's husband. Sarno is indeed the entertainment industry predatory heterosexual who would know what actresses to press for casting couch favors.

Reed hired a friend of his, Don, to be a production assistant. Don, whom Reed physically compared to Johnny Carson, was an outcall hustler whose specialty, according to Reed was shitting in businessmen's mouths. Reed was surprised when he asked Don to make a list of his clients for blackmail purposes, and then Don "couldn't really write. He was, like, semi-literate and you wouldn't know it from looking at him." Reed had a knack for gossip. The most painful aspects of a human's existence were the first things he brought up in casual conversation, or by way of introduction. In Don's case, his working the outcall circuit, his prostitute specialty act, and that Don was illiterate.

Reed complained that *Career Bed* should have been a huge drive-in hit like *All the Loving Couples*. If it had only been made in color. But it wasn't. It was strictly just another black and white soft core offering. No different from any of the flotilla of Distribpix product flooding 42nd Street at the close of the 1960s, static in style and devoid of imagination. The movie was restricted to being a second feature on Deuce double bills.

However, *Career Bed* was used to initiate the shell game Joel used to mask his paltry output. The movie was officially released in 1969, but turns up, accompanied by a teaser topless still of Spelvin and Welles in bed together in the 1972 edition of *Screen World*, effectively giving the film a face lifted opening year, and a new distributor – Provocative Films. Reed had either sold it under the table to a fly by night distributor or Peppercorn-Wormser did not want their names associated with Reed's work. John Willis edited *Screen World*, a round up of all movies released in a particular year. Willis was an old film loving queen glad to accept any submissions given him for a complete collection to fill out his compulsive yearbooks.



The still of Career Bed that appeared in the 1972 Screen World featuring a dark haired (pre-blonde and boob jobbed) Jennifer Welles with Georgina Spelvin.

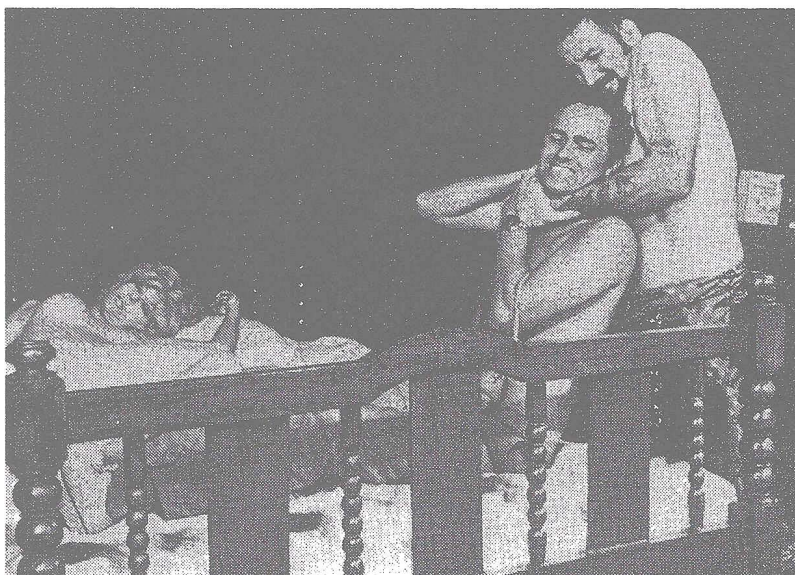
Reed's follow up to *Career Bed* was the sexploitation one-weekend wonder *Sex By Advertisement*. It employed the simplistic loop package format of raunchy incidents held together by a shoestring narrative. People answering personal ads become an excuse for softcore scenes, all crudely designed for S&M patrons in mind. Reed sold this threadbare film, made over two days with zero production value for a nominal sum to Peppercorn-Wormser. It met an even worse box office fate than *Career Bed*. *Sex By Advertisement* was a blink and it was gone 3 day run. Occasional fill in for the bottom third of Deuce triple bills. In this film, Reed does a cameo as a sadist whipping a girl in Central Park – a move to hide his homosexuality and be provocative to his film benefactors, as he had it preserved in still form in his Memory book. Reed is not a good-looking man.

Through some of the late 1960s and early 1970s Reed flew on a magic carpet that brought him to Singapore and Hong Kong, paid for by sweatshop owner and former news cameraman Marvin Farkas. The result of this association was Reed's imitation James Bond thriller, *Wit's End*. Now the shell game of making one film appear like he had done several went full flower. Like most of Reed's movies, it went through a different title with different distributors, being re-released on 42nd Street every couple of years. Always at the bottom of the bill. A consistent time killer.

The film originally ran under the title *Wit's End* when it first hit screens in 1971, looking woefully out of date even then. It did not prove to be a hit with the drive in crowd, which was already accustomed to more severe movies like *The Big Doll House* or John Ashley's Filipino *Brides of Blood* series, films with heavy S&M content and explicit violence.

In 1975, Reed re-sold the movie to Joe Green, a distributor who specialized in tax write off foreign films. Green had an apartment near Reed's in the Carnegie Hall area, and kept prints of films in his refrigerator. His biggest claim to fame was "The Joseph Green Film Festival" in December 1975 at Greenwich Village's Quad Cinema, in which a load of foreign films regardless of quality were dumped for two to three day tax write-off runs. Some of the films were fascinating with excellent art house box office potential, like Marco Ferreri's sadomasochistic masterwork *Liza* with Marcello Mastroanni turning Catherine Deneuve into his collared dog. Paul Gegauff's *A Piece of Pleasure*, about an abusive husband life acted by nouvelle vague scriptwriter Gegauff, who in the film kills his wife – when in reality Mrs. Gegauff later killed her abusive scriptwriter husband. *Flossie*, the Scandinavian lesbian girl's school classic. Then there was the plainly silly X-rated *Le Lit-Ze Baudy Bed* and Claude Berri's *Man of the Year*. The films were unceremoniously dumped, never to be seen theatrically in the United States again. But, like Joel Reed, Green's financial success lay in the art of failure in which a loss can be more profitable on the balance sheet than a success in which backers will demand a share of the profits.

Wit's End was re-titled by Green into *Dragon Lady* and had a brief weekend run on the Deuce in summer 1975, before Green dumped all these worthwhile foreign films. Each time it was re-released, it would turn up in *Screen World* under the new title.



The highlight nude shootout scene in Dragon Lady that appeared in the 1975 Screen World featuring Angelique Pettyjohn and Tom Keena

Dragon Lady's last rechristening was by Troma film distributors as *G.I. Executioner*. The film is a paradoxical showcase of Reed's thimble of talent and scriptwriting ineptitude. All the characters speak in the same voice – Reed's. Its most commercial elements emanate from the tits of veteran exploitation actresses Vicki Racimo and Angelique Pettyjohn. Angelique appears in the film's highlight nude shootout sequence. The plot of the film involves a former journalist/secret agent Dave Dearborn (Tom Keena) whose life has decayed into owner of a third rate Singapore nightclub until elements from his homosexual past start appearing mysteriously before him. Especially in the image of Reed as "Mr. Plume" (as in nom de plume) who hands out business cards and instigates trouble. Mr. Plume likes to give Reed's famous lame excuse to burnt investors "I was gonna call you" in the film, before kicking them in the groin, rushing away from them, and taunting "sorry about that." He also keeps tormenting the hero by leeringly saying "SOMEBODY loves YOU!" – making it clear that it's not a female he's referring to. There are bizarre homoerotic scenes wherein the hero is drugged, bound, put in an effeminate costumer complete with tiny pink vest, and menaced with rape by the gay villain's bald clone majordomo.

Ultimately the plot makes little sense but the overriding theme is of homosexual betrayal. The film contains a few truly strange laughable moments. Dave waits in a transvestite nightclub for a man that never appears. Dave pursues

Mr. Plume and finds him in a brothel. Dave has to pay admission, of course, to the whorehouse before catching Plume in the sack with a hooker and getting Plume's kick in the groin. He pursues Plume into a men's room, trying to corner him at a urinal. Plume lies mortally wounded from a gunshot on a boat before Dave. Plume begs to die in peace before falling backwards into the sea shouting "SOMEBODY LOVES YOU!" It's revealed in an expository interrogation scene that Dave "posed as a homosexual" to spy on gangster Jacques Dutan. In a climactic confrontation, Dutan confesses that still has the hots for Dave and feels spurned by him.



*Troma's action-movie campaign re-issue of Dragon Lady aka Wit's End as GI Executioner:
 "they tried to kill him... drug him, torture and pervert him..."
 Note how dissimilar the poster is to the actual actors in the film*



*A gay fiesta: GI Executioner
 A bald clone majordomo of the poof villain bounds, drugs, and menaces the hero with rape.
 A night in a homosexual S&M club or a Joel M. Reed movie? One never knows.*

A GI Executio n e r photo funny:



Joel's leading man, Tom Keena as Dave Dearborn, is questioned about his espionage career



"You posed as a HOMOSEXUAL??"



Dave Dearborn reflects on his lavender past, as a proxy for director Reed peeking into his own closet

Out of all of Reed's movies, *GI Executio n e r* remains the most curious, perhaps because there are pieces of him scattered throughout it like a cracked Freudian nightmare. For once he has actual exploitation pros in the cast. The

nude shootout is bizarre enough for exploitation fodder. There is an opening credit sequence featuring a shrunken Chinaman sucking on his opium pipe, strongly reminiscent of *Mondo* footage, to the 1960ish tune “Wit’s End” The film actually boasted location work in the Orient – albeit many scenes were shot in transvestite districts of Singapore. The leading man, Tom Keena, is not even handsome or dashing in a James Bond sort of way, giving the movie an unintentional Brechtian quality of going against genre conventions. Reed liked to brag that Keena had been in a major Broadway production. He also liked to bring up Keena’s past, saying that he grew up in Catholic orphanages where he constantly got blowjobs from priests. Just Joel’s style. Always bring up the worst and most painful moments of a human’s life with the casualness of presenting a drink coaster.

In the mid 1970s, Reed got the idea to mimic the four-part British horror movie format for a film he made called *Blood Bath*. One consistency of Reeds’ auteurism is that his films always seem to be a few years behind the times. The movie starred *Halloween* and *Rock and Roll High School* actress P.J. Soles in one of her first roles. This was something Reed desperately wanted to exploit after Soles’ sudden 15 minutes of Halloween fame, but Reed’s plans to cash in on her were thwarted. He couldn’t wrench the rights to *Blood Bath* or even a loaner print away from its distributor, the old Cannon Films. This was the pre-Golan/Globus Cannon, the same company that released *Joe*, *Farewell Uncle Tom* and *Scratch Harry*. The owners loathed exploitation to begin with, though they profited handsomely off it. Before they sold the company to Golan-Globus, they made damn sure no one could get their hands on their prints.

Reed would tell potential investors highly unlikely sexual anecdotes about the teenage Soles. Sheet sniffing fan style investors with no knowledge of filmmaking would eat these stories up. That was Reed’s specialty. The marks want to be insiders so bad. “There is a sucker born every minute” was the maxim Reed lived by, and his job in life was to find as many of them as he could.

Another of Reed’s closest scam mates was Vernon Becker. Resembling a rotund *Merchant of Venice*, Becker had produced some of the worst vanity productions to have ever played Times Square: *Nocturna*, a lame “granddaughter of Dracula” parody, and *Hoodlums*, a piece of disco-era dreck which co-starred “Turn the Beat Around” warbler Vicki Sue Robinson. Both movies starred the talentless Nai Bonet and were made because her gangster boyfriend funded them. The movie was severely panned by the few who bothered to show up. The films were taken to task for its unfunny jokes and lack of brains during their three day run at 42nd Street’s New Amsterdam Theater. Becker traded on his R-rated Scandinavian skin flick, *Dagmar’s Hot Pants*, which was a minor hit in the early 1970s for most of his life and was Reed’s sob sister. Together they’d trade tips about ripping off dream chasers.

After a certain point, Becker would keep investors money and just not bother to make the films. He’d been given dozens of chances and blown every one of them. He’d had a deal with the then new *Playboy* cable channel in the early 1980s to make some soft-X films. Nothing came of it. He lived off the production money and *Playboy* got nothing. When *Playboy* considered suing him, it was quite impossible to get blood from a stone. He became a loss to be written off. A lesson Reed studied and digested.

Reed knew well that if his targets got hurt emotionally in the game all the better. They weren’t likely to complain out of shame and ignorance. They’d crawl away and lick their ripped flesh, raped pride and empty wallet at home in private. It is human nature not to admit to one’s own folly. Everyone wants to be a star, or be next to them. Reed would play on this need. Especially in older middle-aged men who had worked normal unglamorous jobs their whole lives. They felt life slipping by and Reed would promise teenage girls eating from their palms like fawns in a forest. And for many investors that was enough. They’d turn up at Reed’s apartment for a “casting call” presented to them via Dorothy Palmer, a despicable casting agent who charged people for representation, as well as skimming off of unknowing porn actors with pathetic legitimate aspirations.

In February 1976, after witnessing the commercial sex-sadism-gore formula of the *Ilsa* movies hitting the jackpot on 42nd Street, Reed made the movie he would live off of the rest of his life. Its original titles at drive-ins were *House of the Screaming Virgins* and *Sardu Master of the Screaming Virgins*. Reed was obsessed with talking to potential investors about virgins, how many he had fucked, how many *they* could fuck after they got to know him. Reed knew how to massage a target. He’d have his ducks lined up and start shooting them as fast and hard as possible.

Skills, people that he’d promise a kickback to in one form or another, although he’d often never make good on it, feed the engine of Joel Reed’s scams. Reed used the late Nick Demetroules in this manner. Nick was partners with Jerry Gross in Cinemation Industries, which had been an exploitation film releasing giant in its day. When Nick and

Jerry broke up, Nick formed NMD Films, a company that released giallos with Americanized names like *Stateline Motel* and bottom draw horror films like *Invasion of the Blood Farmers*.

Joel financed this movie through Alan Margolin, a man in the refrigerator business. Like the lion's share of Joel's investors, he was a shy businessman who wanted to make his life more exciting by involving himself in showbiz and knew absolutely nothing about filmmaking, let alone New York's insular exploitation beehive. Joel boasted he talked Margolin out of \$70,000 to produce the film, which was shot in less than a week and couldn't have cost more than \$10,000 to make. Reed claimed one of the decisive factors in parting Margolin with his cash was sending out for Chinese food and having porn actress Viju Krem, who played one of the leads, dine with them in the nude. Joel chuckled about how this display really shocked and impressed Margolin.

Joel threw a transsexual porn actress Nick Demetroules' way while Nick was in the midst of a nervous breakdown brought on by a divorce. Joel promised the tranny a role in his film, and they both ganged up on Nick. "I was threatened with severe violence" Nick noted about the situation. Transsexuals can be demanding sociopaths. For a quiet, shy person like Nick, at first the dating of what he thought was a freespirited gal, turned ugly with the revelation he was trapped like a fly in a tranny's penny jar - with Joel, the resourceful blackmailer, there to turn it all vile *publicly*.

Thus, at Reed's behest, Nick told film distributor Stan Borden that he thought *The Incredible Torture Show* had huge boxoffice potential - playing on Stan's notoriety in releasing kink movies and his own passion for the subject. Nick played Reed's poker game *for him* by insisting that he couldn't afford to pay Reed's asking price for it, *since it would be such a big hit*. Stan Borden recalled that, "*they had this picture. They were showing it around. Nobody wanted it. So what happened, there was a distributor in New York that loved it [Nick]. I saw the picture. I blew a lot of money. If the picture didn't sell, I figured I'd work it with something else, a double header or something. They thought they should make a lot of money from it. Everybody I showed it to, nobody wanted it. I did it as a favor. It was a real stiff. I told them what they did wrong, but you can't tell 'em nothing. They're all experts. No matter what you did - if the picture made a few hundred thousand - it wasn't enough. Reed conned the producer [Margolin] into believing that it would make a lot of money. The guy [Margolin] was always callin', you know. It was a pain in the neck. Reed owes everybody. He's a freeloader and the stuff he does, you know...*" It caused enough grief for poor Stan to send him scuttling back for comfort food from Lou Siegel's, a restaurant catering to Jewish Mafia figures, for an overstuffed Pastrami sandwich.

Stan released Reed's *The Incredible Torture Show* with an expensive campaign that centered on a glossy bondage illustration. The narrative of *The Incredible Torture Show* was partly inspired by the then-popular downtown Soho off Broadway kink revue, *Another Way to Love*, teamed with elements lifted from *Ilsa She Wolf of the SS*. *The Incredible Torture Show* marries S&M to terminal gore. Its show's performers are tortured, mutilated and killed.

The leather-clad balding queen named Sardu outfitted in black and sporting ridiculous 70's swinging gold medallions who directs performances, sets his eyes on a critic he wants to kill and a ballerina (Viju Krem) he'd like as part of his troupe. They're both kidnapped. The ballerina is brainwashed by Sardu's assistant, an ecstatic Afro'd dwarf (Louis DeJesus) that bangs cymbals around her suspended torso as synthesizer music farts on the soundtrack. Eventually she is tortured into kicking the critic to death on stage in the film's "*comic highlight*", as Reed called it. A woman has a hole drilled through her shaved head. Blood is sucked out through a straw to the accompaniment of rinky-dink music. *The Incredible Torture Show* beat any film on the Deuce for amateurism, moral noxiousness and disgust for disgust sake. The most remarkable aspect of the movie, and why it is so beloved to collector nerds, lay within Reed's obsession with depicting females as bloodied dead mannequins. Constantly graphically depicted.

When the curtain rose, a flop happened akin to *Springtime for Hitler*. When Reed's movie opened on that freezing day in February 1976 as *The Incredible Torture Show*, it had a four-day run on the Deuce and played to an empty house at the coliseum styled Cinerama Theater on 47th Street and Broadway. Later, the movie was relegated to ghetto theaters on double bills with Ted Mikels' *The Corpse Grinders* and Herschell Lewis' *The Gore Gore Girls*, a fact that Joel hides and is only revealed by Joel's own collection of clippings.

What had Reed done wrong to have the film be such a disaster? Was the film really *that* terrible that it bored the few S&M enthusiasts and gore aficionados who showed up? For once, Reed's auteurism hadn't been five years behind the times, as tends to be a consistent problem with the scant few movies he's made. The year 1976 saw a huge offering of bdsm pornography material in America. Besides any kind of kink situation you wanted to see played out, from relatively tame girlfighting to roughie abduction/rape scenarios, there were a host of professionally made peep booth loops by companies with cryptic names like HOM, TAO and RDF. Sexy sleazy movies that blatantly focused on the torture of women, or women torturers like Jess Franco's *Barbed Wire Dolls* and the megasuccessful *Ilsa, She Wolf Of*

The SS. Films that became Deuce staples. The local XXX Deuce adult fare featured roughies, heterosexual films mixing force and violent fantasies with straight sex, from extreme and professionally executed variants like Alex De Renzy's *Femmes de Sade* to Terry Sullivan's crude stocking mask assault films like *Masters of Discipline*, and local NYC hits like Shaun Costello's *Dominatrix Without Mercy*. The "leather lifestyle" was even becoming part of the 1970s casual sex circuit.

Though he had caught up with the times, Reed still could not understand them. Reed's act was stale. The only thing exploitation enthusiast, Ron Roccia, remembered coming to Times Square from Philly for another acid and movie binge, was "I was tripping my brains out during the movie" and "seeing Sardu in the theater lobby in his leather costume like the movie right in the middle of my trip. That was the sole highlight of the movie." Ron found the film woefully unmemorable as compared to Herschell Gordon Lewis', whose prints he'd collect. And the short run is strange in itself. Lesser movies premiered have played the Cinerma for at least a week.

The aesthetic problem lay in that gore aficionados are hung up on special effects and want to see ultraviolence played out as realistically or shockingly possible. S&M enthusiasts are satisfied by seeing a pretty masochistic girl get put into bondage and get a good thrashing. Both points Reed managed to fuck up. Reed also permeated his movie with bad Broadway/theater district jokes that the audience could care less about, and even the most dedicated Broadway show tune queen would find lame. They wouldn't be going to a film like this, anyway. Another major problem is the acting. For the most Reed's direction is way off. He has the actors, who are largely capable, play things in a straight off-Broadway manner or as a soap opera rehearsal, and any laughability potential in the style of Herschell Gordon Lewis's exaggerated style of acting is largely wasted. Exaggerated acting style with a director that can stylize it is one of exploitation's hallmarks. Stan Borden ended up playing the movie on double headers out in ghetto theaters – like *The Corpse Grinders* or *The Gore Gore Girls* – which were aesthetically successful in the manner that *The Incredible Torture Show* was not.



*Viju Krem, Seamas O'Brien and Luis DeJesus working 18 hour days ...
before the odious "payroll robbery" scenario.
The only thing Reed got right was Krem's lingerie*



Sardu camps it up: now for the bad movie loving French



*Sardus dines off a female victim's back
S&M turned into an idiot's joke: the worst possible insult to the kinky crowd*



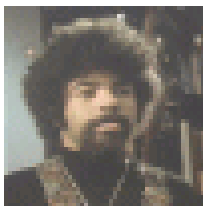
*Blood sucking Freaks' notorious brain salad surgery
Enough to make one vomit – if it weren't for the pathetic special effects and rinky dink music*

The cast and crew were mostly recruited out of hardcore pornography in that “you’re gonna do somethin’ legit” manner that Joel has polished over the years. Scammed actors include Juliet Graham, a onetime girlfriend of Jamie Gillis who did a memorable part in *The Story of Joanna*; the remarkable character actor Luis DeJesus, who was also known as “Short Stud” in hardcore films; Viju Krem and Lynette Sheldon, who were veterans of Gerry Damiano hard X productions. All were shafted out of their salaries in Joel’s usual manner. Joel trotted out his “payroll robbery” scenario, as if it was the Old West and the pony express was held up by bandits. It was among Joel’s most odious scenarios and one he had learned well from working with Joe Sarno. He would bellow, “the payroll was stolen!” with mock disbelief to a crew who’d just completed a twenty-hour shoot. The actors would be confused and broken from fatigue.

Reed slid out of paying veteran roughie director Ron Dorfman, who was the film’s cinematographer, for his work. He had apparently offered Ron some vague “profit sharing” plan— and never made good on it when the film was re-sold to Troma. Dorfman wouldn’t even put his name on the movie; the cinematography is credited to “Gerry Toll.” When Ron was an up and coming talent in the exploitation business, he had bailed Joel out, photographing and editing *Career Bed*, one of his first adult film jobs. Undoubtedly Ron’s skill gave the movie a patina of genre professionalism that the incompetent Reed couldn’t have. As he often does after a burn, Joel covered his tracks by spreading a malicious, untrue sexual rumor about Ron and his wife. Thus, he became an ugly stench that Ron didn’t want to contemplate, let alone bother pursuing for his money. Like many of Joel’s victims that he culled from hardcore, Ron was a really nice, talented person. He had co-directed the pioneering rock documentary *Groupies* and had been a cameraman on the Rolling Stones concert documentary *Gimme Shelter*. Later, Ron aptly put it that Joel “*had a good address, but that’s all.*”

The con game all along was for the movie to fail, and Joel to pocket around \$60,000 that he lived on for several years, considering that he had only spent money on minor production value and only paid small character actors like,

literally, Luis de Jesus where there would be a threat of physical violence afterwards. Luis was wee but he could get a brother from the projects down on 10th Avenue where he lived in to kick Joel's ass.



Little Luis de Jesus – the beloved “Short Stud”

The movie was a flop. Too bad for the cast and crew. Too bad for Margolin and his \$70,000. Too bad Stan Borden had to pay for an expensive ad campaign after getting talked into releasing the film by Nick Demetroules. Joel's payback to Nick was the release of his universally unwanted *Night of the Zombies*, which sat on the shelf since around 1979 before receiving a cursory, two day release on the Deuce.

After Margolin's ownership on *The Incredible Torture Show* expired, the rights reverted back to Joel, who had shistily written this into his contract to begin with. The movie became an ugly episode in Margolin's life, one he'd rather let go of and forget. At that point Margolin's wife was enraged at him for pissing away so much money on a loser investment and “*hanging around with such scum*”, as she put it.

What Reed did to Niles McMaster, a lead actor of *The Incredible Torture Show* is revealing. McMaster was a sometime soap player whom Joel conned into thinking Joel would produce and direct a James Bond style thriller starring him. McMaster paid for a year long vacation for Joel to shmooze in Los Angeles, look for marks and lay low from New York where everyone who he owed had their collective irritation focused at him. Joel had McMaster front him cash to form a “company” that would raise money for this project that would never see the day of light, and that seemed to have resulted in a meeting with Martin Balsam, who wanted too much money to appear in the movie.

After Niles' bank account ran dry, Joel had to return to New York where he tried to keep the money rolling in and got bold about thieving it. Reed got a gig as production manager for pornographer Gerard Damiano, who was unaware of Reed's foul past. When Joel pulled the payroll robbery nonsense on Damiano, actress Sharon Mitchell reared back and punched Joel in the face when he gave her that fake ass “no pay for you” story. The junkies in the cast were the ones with balls. Demanding payment for services rendered – and with monkeys on their backs that demanded to be fed. They'd go ape shit on Reed. They knew it was a rip off and it insulted their intelligence. Gerry Damiano is known for his ethics in a shady business. When he heard about this he wasn't having it. Oh, *HELL* no! He was enraged that Reed was trying to skim using *him* as a front, he banished Reed like a dog that had dirtied his set. Damiano then blackballed Reed, never permitting him to have a production manager job in porn again. Reed tried to cover his tracks with his nerd admirers and potential investors by claiming he worked for Damiano and offered to “fill in” by being the stunt cock when the leading man couldn't finish the job. *As if*.

The Incredible Torture Show went out of circulation when Stan's company, American Film Distributing, became inactive. NYC film writer Bill Landis originally contacted Reed in 1981 for a print of *Torture Show* since it hadn't been shown for five years and thought it might make an unusual addition to the film festivals he was holding at Club 57, the Mudd Club and 8th Street Playhouse. His curiosity was piqued because he had managed to miss the movie on its four day run and it had an aura of sadomasochism because Stan *Olga* Borden released it. Reed didn't have a print, but made himself available to any journalistic attention nonetheless. He was doing nothing at that point so there was nothing to write about.

Later in 1981 Landis dabbled in theatrical film distribution. He was the first to revive Herschell Gordon Lewis' classic *Blood Feast* at the 8th Street Playhouse after the film hadn't played in New York in a decade. *Blood Feast* was his first attempt to expand beyond his screenings at Club 57 and Mudd Club into a theatrical setting. It was the dead of winter. The temperature in the teens, but the movie still drew a decent crowd. *Blood Feast* proved not the smash hit he hoped for, but it did well enough for Landis to strike up an amicable relationship with Steve Hirsch, the late, eccentric owner of the 8th Street Playhouse. Steve was a legend in terms of the hardcore sex hungry gay New York scene. A tiny toupeed elf, Steve ran midnight movies every night of the week and enjoyed picking up sexually pent up teen couples on dates who turned up for *Rocky Horror* on the weekends. He'd sometimes fuck the girls while he'd suck the confused boys' teenaged dicks. While not fucking young couples, Steve would troll the off duty hustler trade in his theater who were

watching movies. Steve's sexual excesses were infamous – he boasted of having sex in every area of the theater. Everywhere from his office to a large air conditioning vent. And he was quite proud that although he stood only 5 feet 2 inches, he had an 11 inch dick, something he'd let acquaintances know by flashing private Polaroids. A typical conversation with Steve sometimes ended with bon mots like, "I gotta go now, I'm going off to Christopher Street Books to get fucked in a peep booth by any Puerto Rican I can pick up there with a big cock." Steve would be one of the first to die of what was then called "the gay cancer" or "GRID" – what became known as AIDS. Steve sponsored *Sleazy id Express*' first midnight movie presentations and big month-long exploitation festival. Steve would also become enmeshed in the Joel Reed saga.

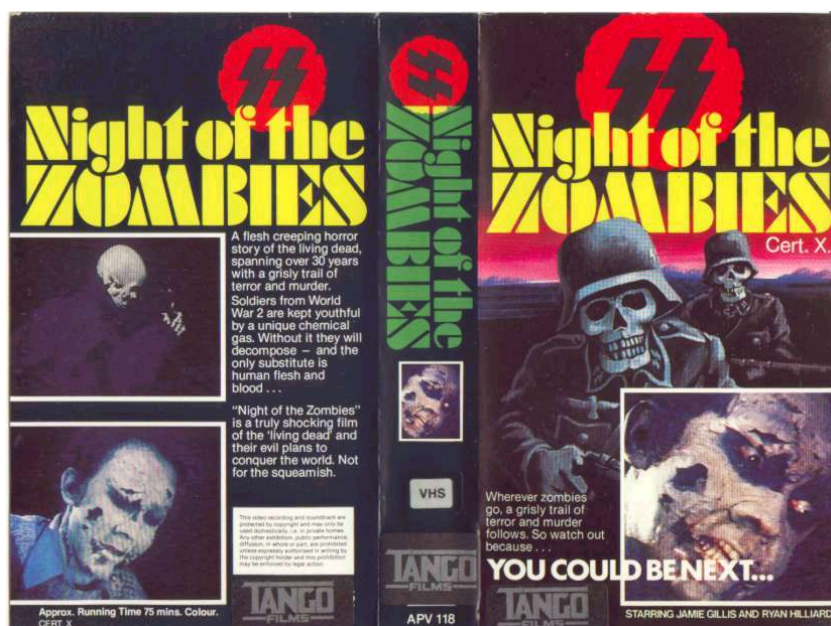
Shortly after reviving *Blood Feast*, Landis went to the Deuce's Selwyn Theater on a bitterly freezing February 1982 night to finally see *The Incredible Torture Show*. The rights had reverted to Reed, and he'd sold them to the self-conscious exploitation outfit, Troma. Troma had re-released it under the title *Bloodsucking Freaks* with a goofy ad campaign and an R-rating that was phony baloney. The theater was empty from the cold and the audience sat silent and bored. Reed later complained that he felt its humor was "too sophisticated for a bunch of niggers on 42nd Street." After writing the movie up for the trendy paper on the scene, *The Soho Weekly News*, and his own trailblazing publication, *Sleazy id Express*, Landis met Reed. Reed was a director known for few films, placing him in the truly obscure category. After dinner, Reed asked for a "loan" of \$100. Reed called Landis two days later to "borrow" another \$200, saying his rent was overdue. Reed acted relieved and grateful. There was a tired quality to Reed, Landis thought. He wondered if all these old exploitation guys turned out like what he was seeing, and felt the \$300 cost would only give him more insight into his subject matter.

Landis was also interested in being the first to write up Joel's latest catastrophe and what would turn out to be his last movie, *Gamma 693*, which was retitled to a more commercial *Night of the Zombies*. It was a fairly bloodless and lifeless horror film set in Germany but contained cuts to Manhattan's *Cruising*-era Christopher Street. The film was so threadbare there wasn't even a real music track to it. Ron Dorfman even does a character turn in the movie, playing a Gillis' boss, a CIA chief, in a scene that looks shot in a few minutes. Ironical, as Ron had directed Gillis in many excellent hardcore roughies, but this cinematic reference is lost on anyone not in the know. But the movie's real novelty was having porn actor Jamie Gillis as the lead. Reed himself does a character turn in the movie, playing a neo-Nazi, and dies, inexplicably breaking the continuity, on Christopher Street in the background in Gillis' arms. Reed had this scene immortalized in stills in a height of ugly narcissism. The sequence also gave him the opportunity to be Jamie's director surrounded in public by Jamie's considerable gay following, albeit for a day.

Nick Demetroules really didn't want to be taken by Joel Reed again with this mess of a movie. Nick had grown inactive in the theatrical realm. He was cashing in on video and cable right sales of his movies, a brand new avenue at the time for old films to be seen. Because of the video rights, Nick took on *Zombies* for distribution. Nick told Landis that that was really where the money was in exploitation in that year of 1981. Exploitation was going to get its second wind with the advent of home viewing rentals. You could turn over a film, no matter what the quality, to cable TV and videotape.

Nick later wrote to Landis that "speaking of Sir Joel Reed, I bet you didn't know this tidbit of information – he was the only visiting writer/producer/director/actor (and child molester) to have his very own coffee mug at NMD Films. Yes! And he wasn't even under contract to us – except if you consider his *Gamma 692* or *693* -I don't seem to remember the exact number, which we were forced to distribute under the threat of severe physical violence. But the real reason he had his own mug was that Brian, Nick's sales manager and Marilyn, Nick's secretary didn't want to chance using a mug Joel had ever put his filthy lips to accidentally, lest he contaminate someone. So they went out and bought him his own mug. *Scary but true?*"

Porn star Jamie Gillis, who had just got some extra work in the Sylvester Stallone thriller *Nighthawks*, was again another adult movie actor that Reed fucked over because he'd be grateful for more legitimate exposure. When he was not paid for the movie he was too angry to pursue it. Gillis recalls that the trip to Germany was a nice diversion but he never received the promised cash for his role. "Reed stills owes me \$400 for being in the movie and blamed it on the producer Lorin Price." Price was another known quantity in the theatrical world that was portrayed on an ugly oil painting on Reed's living room wall. Eventually Reed and Price invited Gillis to the Carnegie Deli so they could show him off to other gullible investors. Gillis wanted payment or at least an apology. All he got was the offer of a pastrami sandwich. He declined Reed's lousy lunch.



British video boxcover for *Night of the Zombies* (the film having the most aka's of all of Reed's paltry output)
 — dull and nothing that would make you want to sit through the movie.

To cover his non payment of Gillis, Reed enjoyed regaling any potential investors with the fact that he knew Gillis, along with raunchy sexual anecdotes about him. “Jamie gets pretty girls to go with him but they get sick of having to dildo him and shit on him. He likes to get fucked in the ass. When we were in Germany, Jamie took me to this bar full of Turkish and Arab migrant workers who were into fucking guys in the ass. He said, ‘hey, Joel, get yourself an Arab!’” At least Gillis’ inclinations have always been out in the open and well known. The retelling of the story out of Reed’s mouth only betrays Reed’s closeted qualities. Gillis actually took Reed to a hustler bar, as Gillis is quite generous in purchasing sexual favors for pals, and felt it would get him on the good side of his director.

Reed was eager to impress *Dragon Lady*’s producer Marvin Farkas of the film’s resale value. He needed a copy of the *Screen World* the film appeared in. Reed invited Bill Landis to come enjoy lunch on with Reed and Farkas at the Second Avenue Deli. And *please* could Landis pick up a copy of the 1976 edition of *Screen World* from Movie Star News next to Landis’ apartment before meeting them as Farkas was anxious to see it.

Farkas seemed to be another nervous, thin, balding sweatshop owner who kept only perfunctory contact with the United States, spending most of his time in the Orient. But many elements of *Dragon Lady* indicated it was made for a *different* type of patron, one with a lavender streak considering all the homosexual innuendos and activities that occurred in the film. Despite the fact that Reed claimed to Landis that Farkas was the most sexually aggressive heterosexual he had ever met, making blatant offerings to airline stewardesses such as “let me eat your pussy right now.” Reed used film writer Landis to convince Farkas that he still had a cult following thanks to Landis’ write up of the re-issued *Bloodsucking Freaks*. Reed wanted to explain to Farkas that perhaps they could do a cash-in from Troma since the rights to *Dragon Lady* were reverting back to him.

Reed introduced Landis to his best friend Elliot. Elliot was the affluent businessman seen in Joel’s clippings/memory book. Elliot’s penthouse on New York’s expensive Upper East Side, with its red and gold décor, looked like a cross between a western set and a Chinese restaurant. To refer to Elliot’s appearance as offbeat would be polite. He was packed into a truss and wearing an obvious hairpiece. He had an illegal hairplug operation in Mexico and unfortunately went swimming too quickly afterward, leaving his scalp a mass of inflamed infected welts. Elliot came complete with a Van Dyke beard and looked like the poster of the fakir piercing his neck with a needle in the *Mondo* movie poster, *Ecco*. Elliot made a lot of money from a sweat shop company that imported crappy office products from Mexico.

Reed said that Elliot had been married once but was “half gay.” That Elliot was from a wealthy family and his homosexual behavior was a product of both too many years spent at all male boarding schools, a disapproving father,

and Elliot's own vanity. "Ya know, Elliot had posed for some of the original photo packs many years ago. When Elliot was a sailor, he used to hustle on 8th Avenue. He met some Catholic priest in a subway men's room and would get a blowjob once a week from the priest for years. Elliot likes to get blown or get fucked in the ass." None of these bizarre sexual tales from Reed could be confirmed or denied, of course.

Other *Boys in the Band* style anecdotes about Elliot would emerge after Reed had a few drinks. They had met "in a cheap hotel where there were skinny dividers between the rooms" i.e., a bathhouse. Or had he rescued Elliot from an argument with a serviceman? They had been roommates in the early 1960s. He said Elliot was fond of picking up hookers off the street and bringing them home. Once a black streetwalker stole Elliot's wallet and Elliot pursued the thief down the street in his boxer shorts. "He's a kinda tough guy, my friend Elliot," Reed would pathetically comment about this incident. Of course, there was the incident of Elliot coming home from work "in his Brooks Brothers suit" to find Joel drunkenly masturbating in the living room. Elliot was to have supposedly said, 'Oh Joel you're cock is so magnificent' as he fell to his knees with his mouth open. "I started laughing so hard I pissed in his mouth." Sure, Joel Landis sat stupefied by these stories.

Then Joel took Landis to visit another, far less flamboyant friend who also lived in a penthouse on New Year's Eve as 1981 turned to 1982 before Landis went out to see the ball drop on Times Square. The only time Landis would bother to participate in this tired tradition, though he did get a good view of it from the front of a peep emporium and witnessed lots of gang kids stomping and robbing tourists in the aftermath. Joel tried to make it clear to Landis that he personally might have his ups and downs, but his well to do friends would always cover him financially, especially the strange man named Elliot. He was Joel's wealthy benefactor and Reed insinuated that Elliot would always grudgingly pull him out of any monetary mess he'd fall in. Most importantly to Landis, Reed offered to increase Landis' contacts in to what was left of the New York City exploitation film network, an insular bunch to begin with that was rapidly shrinking because of the ages of its members.

Landis wanted to enter film distribution. He already had some early mentoring in this field when he rented old Audubon releases from Radley Metzger's partner, Ava Leighton. She instructed him on how to get a good quote, how to set up an effective ad matte to play up the sexy angle, how to exaggerate for shock value's sake. Landis knew of a batch of exploitation movies up for sale, and Reed told Landis that he'd work with him on a distribution company. And wanted just a bit more "front money" to get the ball rolling - \$200 - which was the "price," according to Reed, to form a New York based corporation. Landis wrote him a check.

But no sooner did he cash the check, Reed started braying about making a new film. Landis told Reed he might be able to capitalize on a Herschell Gordon Lewis type cult reputation that *Bloodsucking Freaks* was building thanks to his review of it, but a distribution company was the most pragmatic thing to work on at the moment. Still, Reed asked Landis if he knew anyone wanted to invest in a movie. Reed felt he could reel in a few investors at fishing clubs, but needed Landis, too, to get the ball rolling.

When the subject of investors came up Landis thought of his friend Roger LeMar. LeMar and Landis had gone to see wild triple features since they met long ago at New York University. LeMar had been insistent about purchasing an entry to cheap exploitation movies, which he felt would be fun to participate in and would be sure to turn a profit. After seeing some exploitation films that were cheaply made like *The Corpse Grinders*, LeMar always said that why shouldn't he and Landis make one? They could do much better, if only Landis could find a director with a little technical skill.

Unfortunately for Roger LeMar, and unbeknownst to Landis, he fit the profiling of Reed's marks all too well. There never had been anything glamorous in his life. He had grown up in Jersey City and lived in a tiny apartment with his mother. Male pattern baldness set in early. The only sex he expected in life was prostitutes he paid for out of the back pages of *Screw* magazine. He was resigned to being, as is the expression in the United Kingdom, a punter. The occasional free soirees for LeMar had been on the fly episodes in various Turkish baths where the steam room would obscure his beer and potatoes body. The jobs he held included being a housing inspector for Jersey City, some obscure function for a company called National Bulk Carriers, and then working as a computer programmer for the Bank of Tokyo and the now defunct Marine Midland Bank.

Landis forked over \$2,500 (after the \$500 he previously fronted, making the total \$3,000) to Reed to form a film distribution company. LeMar quickly followed suit, immediately writing Reed a check out for \$4,000. "I felt it was the price of admission, in a way," recalls LeMar. "I thought these movies were made so cheaply there was no risk in

losing my money. I thought, at the least, I'd make my investment back." Landis at the outset had an eerie premonition that that this would be the price of a life lesson he'd learn well and never forget.

Reed was fond of breaking out stories of stage mothers, celebrities he had supposedly fucked as a press agent, and a rotating casting couch for LeMar's benefit. LeMar recalls that, "at first he seemed interesting. But then a lot of the stories sounded like they came out of the *Star* or *Enqui rer*. Joel claimed to know a lot of people. But it was like he claimed people who merely said hello to him in a coffee shop were his friends, when it looked like they were merely being polite." Despite all this blather, Landis or LeMar never saw Reed around any women. As Jamie Gillis aptly put it, "Joel *talked* a lot about women."

Again, pour a few drinks in Joel Reed's glass and stories of a lavender nature would spill out. Like the one about the Malaysian crew buying him a boy prostitute at the wrap party for *Dragon Lady*. Reed said he pretended to be drunk and passed on the offer. "Oh Ahmed, I'm dizzy and I'm gonna pass out, you have 'em." Reed would then mimic the crew member with a theatrical mess of an Oriental-East Indian accent leering, "*oh thank you Mr. Reed.*" LeMar, a habitual trick, pragmatically mused "I don't see him giving anything free away." And there was Reed's mantra of "it's a pity people cannot accept homosexuality in themselves. Ya know, five of my friends died who liked to get beat up by hustlers" - A huge amount of people to know who were killed that way by anyone's standards.

Speaking of actual deaths rather than the phony cinematic snuff he specializes in, another eerie factor in *The Incredible Torture Show* saga was how many of the film's cast members had gone to premature ends. Making Joel's stories even harder to confirm, further obscuring his dishonesty, and giving him a sick two cent Tennessee Williams quality of someone surrounded by death, all the better to scare off a superstitious mark who'd he'd scam. Viju Krem was "accidentally killed" on a hunting trip. Luis De Jesus, exploitation/hardcore cinema's beloved "Short Stud," passed away of a heart attack. Seamus O'Brien was stabbed to death in his Greenwich Village apartment. O'Brien had been in the perpetually running tourist attraction off-Broadway play, *The Fantasiks*. Joel liked to insinuate it was some sort of homosexual murder scenario; or that "the poor guy got killed by some nigger trying to break in his nice Village apartment." Reed also made up a strange death scenario he enjoyed repeating with mock sadness that Alphonse DeNoble, a grossly overweight actor known for repugnant roles such as the lecherous super in *Alice Sweet Alice*, had married a beautiful young girl. DeNoble was a degenerate racetrack gambler and had gotten stuck in the turnstiles out at Meadowlands during a manic episode of playing the ponies. The staff had to saw him out of the turnstile. DeNoble felt so embarrassed by this incident that he went home and blew his brains out. The career decline into hardcore and death from cancer of his leading lady from *G.I. Executioner*, Angelique Pettyjohn had conveniently removed her, too, from any comments about Reed.

Reed formed a corporation naming himself as President, Landis as Vice President, and LeMar as Treasurer. Curiously enough, he wanted to snatch the corporate papers away from both Landis and LeMar before filing them at the bank, but Landis was insistent that his signature be there. LeMar was already caught in the maelstrom. Reed got use of the ATM card to access the company money. There were several "dinners on the company."

Reed had a casting call for LeMar's benefit, naturally arranged through the nefarious Dorothy Palmer. Desperate, unknowing acting aspirants had their time wasted by confidence tricksters Palmer and Reed. LeMar sat glassy eyed, in a bedazzled state. Reed began answering his phone with the corporation name. Reed had appropriated some of the company funds for a second phone in his house, along with business cards.

Landis knew what those glassy eyes meant with LeMar. He'd seen them before, on few and far between occasions. LeMar had always been a self-aware sex addict. It was an expression he'd get before he was about to have an experience, or was in the mode of expecting one. The same glazed look a junkie can get before he ties off. The world is passing by them by and their eyes exclusively focus on what their one-track minds want to see.

Joel trotted out Vernon Becker, who emerged from an industrial space he was using as an apartment near Astor Place's Public Theater. A man named Jay Pesco was giving him the run of the facilities. Sometimes Vernon would say they were his "movie studio" for cable productions. Perco supposedly had operated some overnight courier system, but wasn't in the majors like UPS or FedEx. Eventually Pesco took Joel, Landis, Becker, LeMar, and a company of about ten to the Peking Duck House in Chinatown. Joel was convinced that Pesco was loaded and a great catch as a potential investor. Unwittingly, Landis and LeMar were being used as rubes by Reed as "initial investors" like the bait set out for the more valuable whale hunt. Occasionally Landis would find Pesco's phone number in Joel's to-do book, although that was pretty much the last seen of him.

However, Pesco got sick of Vernon and Reed's games and kicked Vernon out. Vernon was reduced to sleeping on Joel's couch when he wasn't mooching stays at acquaintances' apartments. Sometimes he even slept on the floor of the 16mm film rental company, Ivy Films. Vernon traded on people's sympathy for an old man down on his luck that was bedazzled and bedeviled by film and hurt by his lack of fame and fortune. Anyone involved in the arts would feel a twinge of "*Jesus, do not let that be me*" and give him a hand out – unless they immediately perceived how repulsive he actually was. Then he'd get the bum rush. Joel would give shady hints of the truth sometimes about Becker. "He did well once, but things fell apart for him." LeMar began referring to him as *Vermin Becker*.

There was a cautionary question Reed would ask Landis about Becker; if Becker had kept *Landis'* funds, how would Landis react? "I'd beat the living shit out of him. He'd be *so sorry* he pulled that on me when his feeble old bones are broken and his face will be punched in. Vernon would be so, so sorry he crossed paths with me. He can't fight. His dumb jokes, shit movies, unsmooth talk and propensity for ripoffs make me angry just looking at him. Let 'em go to the police and try to prove it was me. Fuckin' thief. Or... if I want to cover myself completely, I'd just hire someone to take care of him for me." Reed looked at Landis in apprehensive horror... as if *he* had a paranoid premonition that someday Landis would turn on him in this fashion. Landis grew rather irritated that Reed had brought Becker up in this fashion to the point of saying, "don't bring Vernon up any more in front of me, or think I feel sorry for him." Yet, very infrequently, Reed would bring up how badly Vernon was doing, annoying Landis in the process, and, ultimately, perhaps as a cautionary tale to himself.

Reed once took LeMar for a private meeting with Elliot. Elliot greeted LeMar at his penthouse door in his jockstrap, turned around exposing his naked ass as he swished away rearranging his toupee in the wall mirror. LeMar remembers Elliot playing a bit of disapproving daddy, occasionally criticizing Reed's pronunciation – not inaccurate, because Reed is a terrible speller with a grating, warbling New York accent. But then LeMar's recollection about the meeting suddenly becomes hazy. As if there were one of those giant hypnotism dials from the 1950s whirled in front of LeMar by Joel and Elliot, or if he was Mickey Finned. The little he will admit to concerns an office party seemingly composed of South American sweatshop workers. "I did meet a Brazilian girl who I found kind of interesting,"

At this point LeMar felt he was finally in showbiz – and was completely under Reed's malignant spell. Landis grew suspicious about why these antics were happening when he wanted to direct the company's attentions to distributing films. "I did it for Roger, Bill," was Reed's reply. "Keep an eye out for more guys like Roger, will ya?"

Reed leeringly told Landis, "all Roger keeps asking me for is to bring a hooker to my apartment." Landis said casually, "whatta you expect? He's Roger LeMar. He asks everyone he knows this." Reed harrumphed, but *did* buy LeMar a hooker with LeMar's own money from the company funds to get a better fix on him mentally and sexually. Sexual blackmail a Reed specialty.

Suspiciously, after this incident, Landis got a call from Reed saying there was a "Las Vegas showgirl" in town that needed someplace to stay. Landis hung up. He was insulted that Reed was trying to send what was obviously a hooker to his apartment to learn his sexual habits and possible drug intake. At this point Landis was getting leery and was anxious to get the distribution company rolling and away from Joel's control.

Landis wanted to purchase the theatrical rights to a bunch of Harry Novak horror movies and other weird films, but Reed vetoed it and told LeMar it was a bad risk. Not to spend any of the company's money, that Landis would derail their goal of making a film. Reed was already employing the con man's game of turning the marks against each other. Divide and conquer. He was already attempted to execute this strategy by studying LeMar's sexual habits, and making lurid comments about them to Landis. "LeMar seems obsessed with ass fucking," again nastily attempting to paint LeMar as a possible closet case. Landis knew LeMar for years and was aware he was a far more complex guy, a knowledgeable obsessive about commercialized sex. But LeMar or Reed would never discuss the evening at Elliot's, which is what Landis was most curious about. Why had that evening reduced LeMar to a state of near-servitude to Joel?

At the time, Landis was still friendly with underground filmmaker Ken Anger and introduced him to Reed. Anger was in the process of attempting to complete a sequel to his gossip book, *Hollywood Babylon II* and was hunting for stories about stars. Reed, Landis, LeMar and Anger had a "dinner on the company." Reed immediately went into his "five of my friends died" mantra and Anger brought up the "Brando photo – a very artfully done photo of Marlon Brando giving a blowjob. Not a keyhole shot at all." "Yeah Ken, ya never know who plays the female role." LeMar almost guffawed out his espresso at that one.

The next day, Anger called Landis. To Landis' surprise, Anger described Reed not as a garden variety closet case but as "a very nice, understanding man." How had Reed managed to con Anger into believing he was the open minded "straight guy" – unless they were *both* planning a mutual scam? Landis immediately thought, *what the hell is going to happen now?* Anger wanted to pay Reed \$200 and a free dinner at Grand Central Station's filthy Oyster Bar in order to record his gossip tales because "I can't remember anything anymore" – perhaps due to his huge LSD consumption. It made Landis speculate about how low Anger would stoop for an anecdote about a star if he'd bother to consider Reed, question the accuracy of his books, and further wonder how off the deep end Anger's overall judgment was.

After witnessing the curious bonding between Reed and Anger, Landis wanted the company's attention directed back at acquiring exploitation films to distribute. The films Landis wanted to purchase included *Axe*, *I Dismember Mama*, *The Child (Kill and Go Hide)* and *I Am the Zodiac Killer*. They were, at the time, pretty rare movies from Harry Novak's Boxoffice International distribution company that never had theatrical runs in New York City. The closest Novak's movies had played to the Deuce were Philadelphia. Landis was never a loser in bets on cult films. Landis knew of the films' strong reputations and loved the idea of owning them. Any of the films could fit a grindhouse or midnight movie slot. Steve Hirsch, at the very least, would show them at the 8th Street Playhouse. Buying these films would be a sure bet.

In an attempt to placate Landis, Reed formed an investment scheme "to raise money for the film distribution business." This involved selling shares of a limited partnership represented by slices of a crudely drawn pie to import two kung fu movies. Reed kept vetoing Landis to LeMar about parting with any of the company funds to buy the old films, saying that there was *more* than could be made if the company had a separate wing for imported film distribution. And, again, to placate Landis, he emphasized kung fu movies, which had a proven box office rate of return and were easily acquirable and marketable if you gave them a flashy title. Landis settled down a bit and started thinking seriously. At Reed's behest, he was told to call *Variety* and announce that their company would release two kung fu movies. "Think of a good title, Bill," Reed pleaded as LeMar looked at Landis anxiously. Landis thought up *Monkey Boxing Massacre*. A mere, few second phone call to the showbiz bible *Variety* produced the requisite announcement.

Landis' review of *Bloodsucking Freaks* was now gathering the film a notorious cult reputation. Troma used Landis' review in its press package and Vestron Video wound up taking a pull quote for the video box cover – conveniently leaving his name off so they wouldn't have to pay him. The review was so apt with its reference to this film's "hi-jinks" that Landis' later collaborator, Michelle Clifford, who was then a teenager in Florida, put the video box down not bothering to rent it.

Landis called his old associate Steve Hirsch about the movie, and Steve booked it as a midnight movie at the 8th Street Playhouse. He then called Troma and wanted a subdistributor's fee for booking the film, a standard practice. Rather than pay him \$50 or \$100, Troma co-head Michael Herz, a Yale law school graduate, threatened to punch Landis in the face.

Later in 1986, Landis wrote an expose of Troma's ugly tactics for *Film Comment* magazine that threw a shit rain on all the phony good publicity the company had generated for itself with write-ups in financial magazines like *Barro n's*. The story revealed Troma's humble beginnings in hardcore pornography. After the story ran, a woman who worked at Troma and had anonymously spoken to Landis for the story called Landis' answering machine attempting to refute her statements with Kaufman and Herz seemingly listening to the call; she sounded terrified, as if there was a gun to her head. Troma continues to use Landis' review in its press package, has sold DVDs of their Reed acquisitions worldwide, and now maintains a very cautious, closemouthed stance about its association with Reed. Troma recently left an interview request by Michelle Clifford concerning their relationship with Reed unanswered.

For a publicity stunt, Steve Hirsch, who enjoyed stirring controversy for fun and profit, called Women Against Pornography after he had booked *Bloodsucking Freaks* as a midnight attraction. Being a crafty queen, Steve knew it would get written up everywhere. Opening night featured underground filmmaker Ken Anger at the door of the theater petulantly repeating, "Is Joel here because I have *no money*." Hirsch smirked "I wanted to say hi to Ken Anger but *look at the sight of her*." Landis had dropped some fairly decent mescaline, following Ron Roccia's example of "feeling like you're in the movie," in an attempt to discover if there were any hidden element to it that he had overlooked. When greeted by the sight of Anger, repeating his empty pockets mantra, Landis, distracted by his tripping, failed to notice the huge black eye that Ken was sporting, as well as the filthiness of Anger's clothes, which looked as if he had been passed out in the Port Authority Bus Terminal for a week. It was then he had an over-vivid view of the proceedings and could barely

refrain from cracking up. Once in the theater, Anger's head rolled back and his loud snoring filled the theater. Reed repeatedly sneered that "Ken's got a black eye. He must've picked up the wrong guy." Or the right piece of rough trade, considering Anger's masochistic inclinations.

Women Against Pornography proceeded to picket, take down license plate numbers and harass neighboring stores. The joke turned sour and it became too much trouble for Steve, with his neighboring businesses bitching at him, so he dropped the movie. However, this incident got Reed interviewed in the feminist antipornography documentary *Rate It X*, where he calls his film a "sophisticated comedy." Again, feminists, with their politically correct dialectic, played right into Reed's greedy hands by giving him more publicity.

Landis was furious about not being able to acquire the Boxoffice International movies, but LeMar was still dolefully hopeful of getting a movie made. After three weeks of supposedly intense work, Reed came up with a two-page treatment called *Sardu Strikes Again* that would be the sequel to *Bloodsucking Freaks*. LeMar, however, remembers that, "Joel never told me which movie he was doing. It was either this sequel to *Bloodsucking Freaks*, or this thing like *2000 Maniacs* about the South called *Renegade Ghouls*. It seemed changed every day on his mood and depending on who he was talking to." The script for *Renegade Ghouls* had been sitting in Joel's draw since he lived on 48th Street; in fact it had his old address shoddily crossed off in pen on its title page.

The next stunt was a "Screaming Cheerleaders" contest held at Peggy Church's restaurant near City Hall. Church was an old associate of Reed's from the sexploitation days and had let him shoot part of *Career Bed* in her restaurant. The grand prize was supposed to be a part in Reed's upcoming movie (which, at this point, he could never decide would be *Sardu Strikes Again* or *Renegade Ghouls*). The runner up was supposed to get a date with Jamie Gillis, who never showed. No woman would take a date with Gillis as a *reward*. Nick Demetroules was also supposed to act as a judge, but also pulled a no-show.

Sure enough, about ten hopeful, unwitting underage wannabe actresses showed up, many with stage mothers in tow. A District Attorney from the nearby courthouse witnessed the name Gillis in the ad, showed up, saw girls of questionable ages, and told LeMar that, "I hope for your sake this is legal." Other witnesses were asking LeMar if he were the model for the grimacing bald man in the hokey poster Troma had designed for *Bloodsucking Freaks*. LeMar left shaken and suspicious, yet, paradoxically, his emotional dependence on Reed seemed to increase.



Troma's goofball ad campaign for *Bloodsucking Freaks*
 "Is LeMar the guy that's in the middle of the poster?"

Landis was getting increasingly annoyed, and was incredulous when Reed said that he wanted half a million dollars to make a movie and that the money Landis and LeMar had given to the company was just “startup capital” to raise more money. Reed constantly whined, “I don’t want to be a joke like Herschell Gordon Lewis.” He became more delusional and self-hating in the manner of the worst exploitation directors when he’d go on about how he really wanted to make movies like *An Officer and a Gentleman*. At one point, he spoke of making a *Winds of War* movie, but how would Reed recreate the harbor in Tokyo? In his bathtub using farts as explosions to topple tiny plastic boats? Blue food coloring for an ocean look?

Landis introduced Reed to no-budget horror filmmaker Andy Milligan at the after theater dining mecca, Joe Allen’s, on Times Square’s Restaurant Row. Andy thought Joel was a loser with no manners, which is something coming from the cranky Deuce Popeye Andy was. Andy also thought that no one would ever front him the kind of money he claimed to be looking for to make an exploitation film. Milligan knew what the market would bear. He had actually had a career that Joel claimed to have had. Milligan was highly prolific, knew what to spend and what you could get out of an investor. Andy actually had made movies on budgets under \$10,000, but that was in the 1960s with Andy doing his own negative cutting on them. Landis knew that the \$7,000 he had raised with LeMar would not make any kind of marketable film.

Reed claimed to know a rich man in Hong Kong who would fund his movies and said he was going to visit him. Landis replied that he had never been to the Orient and was coming along too, much to Reed’s dismay. The intent of Reed’s scam was to pretend he left the country and sit in his living room all week, saying that he had gone through the money on the trip, which was, ostensibly, to find more money. Pyramidal, indeed. When Landis insisted on going, and LeMar wanted to join them for a possible Oriental sex vacation, the trip disintegrated into thin air.

LeMar grew manic and suddenly became gripped by a mystical bent. He’d refer to Joel by the nickname “Jolie,” as if he were some apparition of a beautiful, all embracing woman. All the while his job at Marine Midland Bank was slowly being taken over by East Indians, an ethnic group that LeMar, in his white supremacist manner, particularly despised. The experience of Joel Reed was shifting LeMar from sex for sale obsessive to a monastic state of muttering about “angels...angels.” He hoped that Joel’s Hong Kong friend was “one angel... the one angel we’ll need.” The sole result of this touched by angel experience was a telegram from Reed to a Hong Kong address stating, “please advise funds” that went unanswered.

When Landis thoroughly cut any ties with corporate day jobs, Reed was angry, making Landis even more suspicious that the money he had given Reed was to fund Reed’s lifestyle and never make or distribute any films.

Landis held a party at Danceteria in September 1982, a *Blood Feast* party. The film was not yet on home video, and was playing in the upstairs lounge continuously off a privately made copy. The speakers lined up for the guests who were supposed to be Ken Anger, John Waters and Joel Reed. As documented in *Anger: The Unanthorized and Biography*, Anger had a bad drug episode and ended up dashing out of the place before he could go on, causing the evening to erupt into general chaos. Reed and Waters met briefly in the downstairs dressing room. Reed even gave Waters the “it’s a pity people cannot accept homosexuality... ya know, five of my friends died...” speech. Wracked by the flu and this happenstance meeting, Waters still managed to give a professional talk about director William Castle. Reed stood on stage, unable to command the audience, taking motley questions. The pathetic comments he gave were mostly that the beatings actresses received in *Bloodsucking Freaks* were real. And that his hand was striking one actress with a leather strap because Luis de Jesus thought it was too low, disrespectful and disgusting to hit a woman, and thus he didn’t do S&M performances. This says a great deal about Reed’s misogyny, considering that little Luis had been in some of the most severe hardcore loops made in New York City.

Out of a need to literally walk behind the figurative screen that he had been depicting in his writing, Landis became thoroughly immersed in the Times Square lifestyle. He started working a string of adult theaters, working his way up in the Avon chain, known at the time for making and showing Phil Prince’s violent roughies like *The Taming of Rebecca* and *Kneel Before Me*, films that would later be immortalized in the antipornography, right wing politically motivated book *The Meese Commission Report On Pornography*. A book of alienist theology and hatred played out on porn actors. Landis held such positions as projectionist and boxoffice man at the Avon Theaters including the Bryant and Avon 7. He fit in so well with a Times Square gang loosely called “The Avon Crew” that he eventually was rewarded with the day managerial spot at Avon’s Doll Theater on 47th Street and 7th Avenue.

The further he became part of Times Square's inner circle, more and more bad stories about Reed's fuckovers would filter back to him. And revealing anecdotes about Reed's skills would emerge from the Times Square homosexual netherworld. Ken Bowser, who supposedly was optioning a Reed script, turned out to be known as "tall Kenny," a hustler who was well known on the gay theater circuit.

At this point, Landis was enraged at Reed having played on his aspirations to run a distribution company. Reed's criminality became baldly obvious. He was running a shell game that enabled him to live off other peoples' money by playing on their dreams. Far more morally noxious than the three card monte players he'd see every day set up shop in front of the theaters to con tourists.

Landis became determined to get his money back By Any Means Necessary. He demanded it from Reed and said he had no more interest in this "company." Reed played sadsack. He said if Landis wrote him a letter resigning from the company, he'd gradually pay him back.

Landis made Reed show up at the Doll Theater to make his first payment of \$200. He was introduced to Landis' best friend Willie, who ran the "dime a dance" place upstairs, the Satin Ballroom, and the Doll's bouncer, Benny. A dapper black gentleman who resembled Marvin Gaye, Willie was working his way into being a powerful and influential man around Times Square. Among Willie's many activities was being in the private lending business. Benny was a short Puerto Rican guy with a big Afro and enormous arm muscles and had grown up in Hell's Kitchen, where he maintained a small room. He had worked for Avon Theaters since they first started showing porn when he was a teenager back in the late 1960s. The night before, Benny had beaten someone up over a \$5 debt and the broken promise of a beer. It was all about principals on the Deuce. You were only as good as your word.

Both men were effectively intimidating. Benny physically – he'd rough up unruly customers when they got out of line, tossing them into the street. Willie was more the master of the psychological. He could peek behind any wall of human nature and tell you what the peoples' motives are and give accurate probable outcomes.

This meeting at the theater was Landis' message to Reed that he was going to extract his money back one way or another. It could be easy or painful; that decision would be up to Reed. Landis would not be the one wearing the bandage around his head. Landis did not want to touch Reed and was going to delegate that job.

Reed had been found guilty in the court of Times Square. Landis was going to treat Reed like any scummy criminal in the area who owed a drug or gambling debt, a deadbeat who owed him a considerable amount of money. After working around the Deuce, Landis knew the futility of reporting people to the police in tenderloin situations quite well, especially for a mere money burn. Phil Prince, who he was working with at the Avon adult theater chain, had supposedly gotten away with killing four people, including his first wife. So unless he wanted directions to the nearest donut shop, talking to a cop would prove fruitless.

Being manager of the Doll enabled Landis to dole out important favors. Like turning a blind eye to pickpocketing or robbery of a patron, box office skimming, or a quick trick turned in the ladies' room (the only bathroom with a lock on it). Favors are gladly repaid in the Deuce. Once you were friendly with someone like Benny around the Deuce, coupled with the fact you're making money together, it's becomes a pleasure for them to beat someone up that has bothered you. It showed a loving loyalty just the way Landis wouldn't laugh or gossip if Benny had to get sucked off for \$10. Favors turn into magical currency and it was a tight little clan that lorded over the theaters. They were very protective bunch and were as severe as the Westies, a known Irish gang from nearby Hell's Kitchen.

And Reed would have no recourse. If Reed did get beaten up at an adult theater and ran to the stationhouse, the police would laugh him off and would assume it was yet another 42nd Street theater men's room homosexual scuffle. Reed would not look like an innocent tourist, but like a sleazy and suspect toilet queen. In the worse case scenario, Benny would flee the scene by walking just two blocks home to his room in Hell's Kitchen as Reed complained to some tired Irish beat cop that "a Puerto Rican guy hit me.... I don't know, they all look alike..."

After a second payment to Landis of \$300, Joel quickly started crying poverty. Appallingly, LeMar was actually giving him more money because Reed supposedly couldn't pay his rent. Even worse, Reed was alienating LeMar from Landis, telling him he was part of a criminal network in Times Square and was not to be trusted. "Bill's doing things he shouldn't be doing," he'd drone to LeMar. Because Landis had become involved with the Avon crew and its sundry characters, Joel started distorting the situation to LeMar, "I tried to help your friend Bill, LeMar. I really did. And ya

know what he's doin' now, LeMar? *He's making gay movies, LeMar.*" Reed also made intimations about Landis having a drug habit. The hectic lifestyle of the Deuce, the stress of dealing with Joel, and a horrific pedestrian knockdown Landis experienced – on Joel Reed's block – where he was thrown out of Roosevelt Hospital in shock trauma with broken ribs and told to "take Tylenol." Landis told the ER doctor to go fuck himself and his mother too, and started self-medicating with Percodan. These factors had lead Landis into his "honeymoon period" with heroin/cocaine speedballs. When LeMar saw Landis accidentally on the street, he looked at his track marks and sneeringly said, "I see you've been playing around." Reed succeeded in causing static in between LeMar and Landis, who had been friends for many years.

After the fact LeMar admitted that, "I knew Bill was hanging around with a bunch of strange people from 42nd Street that I found suspect. And Bill was getting a little 'out-there' in this crowd." But LeMar is steadfast in his belief that everyone should follow their own sexual urges, no matter how bizarre. "I thought the statement about Bill being in gay movies was an obvious smear, as I knew Bill for many years and he definitely seemed inclined towards the female form, even if he has his moments of being rather, well, offbeat. But *I did* tell Joel that if that's what he felt like doing at the time, *it's Bill's personal business and who was Joel to knock it.*"

Landis piped back at both LeMar and Reed. There was indeed a film that could be made within their budgetary limitations and would fulfill both their star aspirations. They should re-make the *Robinson Crusoe* version *Man Friday* with LeMar as Friday and Reed as Crusoe, one of the worst exploitation movies ever. Landis sarcastically stated it could be done "Warhol style" by throwing Astroturf on Reed's living room floor with an unmoving camera. And they should definitely re-enact the sequence when Crusoe awakens horny and Friday offers himself with "but I have a body, too, master." Reed muttered, "that's not funny, Bill." LeMar grumpily said, "at first it felt like you were calling me Joel's nigger. But then I got used to it."

A few months passed, with no payments from Reed forthcoming. But Landis kept a close eye on Reed's activities, especially that which involved payments to him from Troma. Landis called Chase Bank and found out Reed had over \$7,000 hidden in their corporate account. Reed had owed at least \$10,000 in back taxes since making *The Incredible Torture Show* in 1976. Reed had had been using the "company" account he formed with Landis and LeMar as a smokescreen to hide from the IRS. Landis knew that Reed had just sold *Dragon Lady* to Troma as *G.I. Executioner*, and had also received a handsome payment for the rights to *Bloodsucking Freaks*, as well as the video rights cash-ins for both films. So where else could Joel go to cash those checks and hide the money from the taxman?

Landis got his corporate paperwork, where he was named Vice President of the company. He showed up with his paperwork at the bank, along with the cancelled checks made out to the corporation verifying the amounts he was removing. He calmly explained to the woman at the business accounts section that he was being illegally conned and was withdrawing his share of the money before anything got worse. The woman did not want the bank to be a party to the type of bad business dealings that Landis was describing, or a scuffle within a partnership, and Landis walked out of the bank with to \$2,500 that was owed to him. To this day, he remains the only man who ever got his money back from Reed.

One of Landis' then associates, an infamous queen pornographer named Toby snickered about the whole thing, and egged Landis on to dip into the "company funds" even more. "*He owes you INTEREST on the money, Beeelllll,*" Toby kept saying in his curious mittle-Europe accent. Toby was a master criminal and knew Reed had no recourse. Toby had a belief in Bill that he'd always recover his money and thought that Reed was an inept loser and pretty vulnerable as far as criminals go, which only spurred Landis on. Any sort of troublemaking among the young set was contact eroticism for Toby, who was also looking forward to participating in what would become an inevitable drug binge with Landis. But Landis wisely declined this invitation to the Men's House of Detention. And he also felt it would LeMar's money that he'd be dipping into. Toby grudgingly admitted, "yeah, Beeelll, you don't need the trouble from this creep. You got your bread back."

Reed called that very day to check his bank balance and got a surprise. It was early evening at Landis's apartment on 14th Street. Landis started cooking up a speedball and tied off. After all, it was time to celebrate... and he had cash enough to sit stoned in his apartment throughout the winter. He was laying low from his gig at Avon Theaters because the heat was on them (which would eventually take the form of the Meese Commission), and the violence prone Phil Prince was acting even *more* out of control. Landis was planning to black out the lonely holiday season that was forthcoming. As he was untying Landis took his works out and gently put them on the kitchen table. It was a particularly nice speedball that night, brown dope from an operation called E.T. that came out of an abandoned building

and Bill's favorite nickels of coke, wrapped in little tinfoils, from the spot known as the Brown Door, both in nearby Alphabet City on the Lower East Side.

Bill's flash was quite nice. With those two being his among his favorite brands, he, as always, left a little in the spoon to do a cotton shot. As strong as the jolt and taste from coke was, the dope was such a powerful Persian brown that he started rapidly nodding. Then suddenly the phone rang. It was Joel Reed and he was hysterical. Bill informed him in that deadpan, gravelly voiced, junkie manner that, "Joel, your debt to me has been paid." The table where the telephone was sitting was smeared with the few drops of blood from the shot as Landis hung the phone up.

Reed called back immediately hollering "YOU FUCKIN' LITTLE FAGGOT FREAK..." It was like *Shriek of the Mutilated*. He was hoarse and incoherent, barely able to form a sentence. But the last words Landis could make out were, "you signed a paper saying you weren't in the company!"

"Guess you neglected to file it with the bank. Around the same time you stopped making payments to me." Click.

Reed called back a few minutes later. "The lawyer says bring the money back right away."

Landis chuckled, "what lawyer, Joel? Perry Mason? I'll see you in People's Court." Click.

Landis rang LeMar and offered to go to the bank with him to recover *his* funds. "No Bill, I think I'll give him... just a little more time." LeMar's mother had just died and it had made him extremely depressed and vulnerable. Joel also called LeMar that night, demanding that he help take legal action against Landis. LeMar declined, saying it was Landis' money and that was his right to pull out. But Reed talked LeMar into "replacing the money Landis just stole from us, LeMar." He gave LeMar a cock and bull story that the money wasn't really his, "it belonged to a dead gigolo friend of mine, and it all has to be put back." He toyed with LeMar's head. Legal repercussions. Sexual blackmail. The horrific, sociopathic side of Joel had flown out and LeMar was in too much shock to notice. Reed couldn't have cared less if the upset LeMar had hung himself or cut his wrists.

The next day, Landis had a feeling that some words had transpired between LeMar and Reed in which he was portrayed in a negative light. Landis also maintained a checking account with Chase Bank. It was either the lingering paranoia from the drugs or a healthy fear of Reed's confidence abilities – that the money he had recouped would be withdrawn through Reed's finagling from Landis' bank account bank back into Reed's "company" account. Landis quickly took the \$2,500 out of his bank, kept some money on him, and safely stored the rest in cash in a safety deposit box at another bank.

After Landis had recovered his funds from Reed, Reed started badmouthing him with incredulous lies to anyone who'd listen. Landis was "a thief. He slept on my couch." Landis had already heard him use these lies against others. But Reed neglected to follow a maxim of the con man's game described in the "Underworld Games" chapter of the seminal psychiatric book *Games People Play*: always avoid a mark that laughs at you. And another factor was the drugs. The only people who lived through their contact with the malignant Joel Reed and would kick back at him were dopefiends who operated in an emotionally anesthetized Darwinistic state.

A couple of months after he had taken his money back, Joel's shill, porn crewmember Ken Bowser, contacted Landis on Reed's behalf. The message was that Landis had "owed" Reed something for his time and should return some of the cash. There was the threat that Landis would be badmouthed if he did anything contrary to that. Landis by this time had turned into a valuable player in New York City's Times Square community and was well aware of it. Bowser seems to have remembered Bill as an investor in Joel's scams, not the feral 42nd Street denizen he had become. "Joel is powerless. He's the one who's been blackballed from every set. No pornographer will hire him because he's a known thief. And do you fuckin' think you can threaten *me*? And why are *you* doing it? If *you* are really paying Reed for a script option *you* are being conned." Bowser merely started to stutter.

This faux-Mafia move was something that angered Landis even more, and had caused Sharon Mitchell to punch Reed in the face. Landis informed Bowser that he was aware Reed was a criminal who had tried to con him and that if he bothered him any further, he'd simply do the same Sharon Mitchell had done to Reed. And Bowser would become the target of his hostility, too. "So shut the fuck up and stop defending a criminal."

Reed kept running on about Landis to whomever he met, thus stupidly revealing his own folly. When Kurt Loder profiled Landis for *Rolling Stone* in 1984, he briefly interviewed Reed. Loder later laughed to Landis about Reed as a man with a bad toupee sliding all over his head. Loder didn't bother printing any of Reed's quotes in the story and knew Reed for the con artist he was. Yet at the same time Reed was still using Landis's review of *Bloodsucking Freaks* as a part of a press release to make a sequel.

A series of calls to Joel's apartment at all hours of the day and night from different individuals began, along with unasked for food deliveries. When Reed would get a new investor, the meeting would be disrupted by the telephone and the investor would also get an anonymous call at their job or home flatly stating that Joel was about to rob them. Joel would complain to LeMar that, "I can't get any deliveries here any more, LeMar. No restaurant will deliver to me and it looks bad in front of investors. Some guy named Yin Yang from the Chinese restaurant downstairs keeps coming up here with \$100 worth of food. *Do you know who is doing this, LeMar?*"

Some of the calls came collect from the phone booth in front of the White Castle hamburger joint in Jersey City's Journal Square, a short distance from LeMar's apartment. Playing Inch High Private Eye, Joel would question LeMar, "*do you go to the White Castle in Jersey City, LeMar?*" But Reed could never solve the mystery of the calls or who exactly was controlling them. These were the days before caller ID, and Reed would only be able to locate the source number if it was a collect call. If Reed complained to the phone company about harassment, the line would only be checked at a specific time interval, and the calls never came at with the same hour. The calls included eerie impersonations of Reed's own voice quoting statements he had made to interviewers or in private (often sexually tinged); collect calls from different states; collect calls to and from his friend Elliot; and men of all ethnicities and ages telling him his movies were terrible. *GI Executioner* star Tom Keena began receiving calls in Joel's voice quoting the film's signature line: "*somebody loves you.*" He was livid. Even Joel's father at work at King Karol record shop became a target when the phone would ring and a curious shopper would ask, "do you carry the soundtrack to *Bloodsucking Freaks*?" by a voice that resembled his son's.

LeMar continued to fund Reed's lifestyle for the next few months, albeit in smaller installments. He gave him \$1,000 here, and two more payments of \$500. Finally, LeMar called Landis, saying "Joel just hit me up for another \$500 but I didn't have it to give to him." In total, LeMar had given Joel approximately \$10,000. Landis encouraged LeMar to go demand his money back from Reed.

LeMar showed up at Reed's apartment. "I have nothing, LeMar. I haven't had any food all day. I have no soap or toilet paper.

"Well, Joel, since you haven't eaten, I don't know why you'd need any toilet paper."

Reed sat glumly until LeMar ended up buying him a slice of pizza. Back at Reed's apartment, Reed trotted out the creepy "dead man's clothes" story he's repeated to many. "A screenwriter friend of mine died and I have his clothes. His wife took everything else from him. Some of them fit me, like this suit. And some of them can fit *you*, too, LeMar. Try these on when you get home." Those who encountered Reed had already heard the dead man's clothes scenario. Ron Dorfman heard this from Landis and chuckled that, "I'm glad to hear he's prospering, wearing dead man's pants" – but it convinced LeMar that Reed was broke. Reed knew that playing the death angle on a guy who already has displayed superstitious tendencies like LeMar will keep them psychologically off balance. To others in the tenderloin, it is sick game played by a trick trying to frighten the hustler away before payment for services is rendered. The most popular example is in *Midnight Cowboy* when the elderly John gives Joe Buck a pendant of St. Christopher instead of the promised money. Joe snaps and shoves the telephone receiver down the nasty trick's throat knocking his false teeth out in the exchange.

LeMar snatched one of the three prop-store Civil War swords hanging over Reed's couch. It left a gray stain on Reed's dusty wall. "I'm taking this, Joel." LeMar angrily walked the streets of New York holding the sword, carrying it all the way home to Jersey City on the PATH train.

Around this time in mid-1980s, Reed's old mentor Joe Sarno had adapted to the times by making cheap hardcore sex videos. He didn't want his name connected to them, as he had a legit gig as a cameraman for PBS. When questioned about Reed, Sarno maintained a rather closemouthed stance about his old protégé, and tried to link Reed's behavior more with Vernon Becker. "Sometimes I think those two have their assholes attached."

In 1986, after the LeMar well had run dry, Reed replaced LeMar with a new investor, Stuart Young. Young was in the “video montaging” business – putting together videos of old cheesecake models. Soon enough, a story appeared on Page 6, the gossip column of the tabloid *New York Post*, that Reed and Young were producing *Renegade Ghouls* and were looking for actresses. Bill Landis happened to read it and dialed the columnist to inform her that she was repeating the scam of a con man that never made any of these promised films. She was disturbed but not shocked.

Act II: The After math

Landis’ longtime collaborator Michelle Clifford had moved in with him in 1986. After the experience of Joel Reed, a life change from being a Times Square vice player to mixing in with the general populace, shutting down the original format of *Sleazoid Express*, the cessation of a four year speedball habit, and living with someone on a permanent basis his head was spinning. Landis got a good dose of the Fear when he knew too many cronies who wound up with hepatitis or dead from AIDS. His personal physician – Dr. Bruce Yaffe who had worked on President Reagan after the assassination attempt – had put him in the lucky 1% of people who survived the type of lifestyle he had.

His friendship with Roger LeMar continued. LeMar began a pattern of showing up upset about the whole matter at Landis’ apartment. He’d smoke a joint and the world would be ending because of Joel Reed. He was also falling prey to having his job phased out. It was a really rough time in LeMar’s life. The bank he worked for was being acquired by a multinational holding company, and the axe was about to fall right on him. The Joel Reed debacle had now consumed five years of LeMar’s life. Some Filipino insurance doctor even put him on Xanax, he was so tense. LeMar later complained about bad episodes of forgetfulness and rebound anxiety from the medication, which was still new at the time. He was old school and preferred the traditional Valium as a sedative.

Landis had tried to assuage the wounds and fulfill Roger’s star aspirations by writing two stories documenting his sexual adventures with hookers: *The Sporting Life* for *Swan*, a men’s magazine, and *Friday the Sensuous John* for one of the last issues of the old *Sleazoid Express*. The latter story ends with LeMar’s thoughts shifting from commercial sex and angrily phoning “a man who owes him a great deal of money. Across town the man drunkenly listens to old show tunes. He looks at the phone a long time before answering it. ‘Oh, it’s you, Roger....’”

Landis hated seeing his friend so upset, and felt terrible that LeMar hadn’t gone to the bank and withdrawn his funds when he had the chance. LeMar admitted going to a contingency lawyer for a free consultation. As was the case with the wily Reed, there was no contract promising LeMar anything, so there was no basis for a lawsuit. LeMar wanted to confront Reed. He invited him to dinner. LeMar made a date with Joel to go to the same restaurant, Piraeus My Love, at which Reed had drained the bank account with numerous dinners on the company. LeMar brought a gift-wrapped roll of toilet paper and a greeting card of a man sitting on a toilet seat captioned, “our friendship has been a moving experience.”

LeMar showed up at Reed’s apartment, which had three witnesses waiting for him. LeMar was introduced to them as “hey guys, this is the cocksucker and shit eater who’s been crank calling me.” LeMar immediately became apprehensive and off guard.

LeMar ended up buying Reed meatloaf as he sat and sipped espresso after espresso. In a final stroke of greed, Reed offered to introduce LeMar to his new partner, Stuart Young, thinking that if LeMar teamed up with another mark, he’d get more cash out of him again. Michelle and Bill sat observing the scene a few tables away. In a moment of instant theater, a man sitting with a barfly at a wee sized table passed out drunk on the floor next to them. Out of work actors Joel had used to be the last witnesses to the event... more shills used to freak out the unwelcome documentarians and witnesses on LeMar’s behalf? It only made for comic relief, as the staff hustled them out on the street even though their bill was unpaid, fearing a lawsuit.

LeMar left the restaurant, still hugging the toilet paper, standing and shaking, quivering on the street, then was curiously lost in the commotion. Soon enough, he arrived back at Landis’ apartment on East 14th Street to rush to the toilet. The espresso and meeting with Reed had worked a wicked mojo on his bowels. LeMar was equipped with an inconspicuous tape recorder to document the meeting, but managed to bungle the bugging job. The only audible words that emerged from the tape were Reed loudly proclaiming that he had “learned his lesson about *those* type of movies.”

The following day, LeMar received a call from Reed claiming that he had been “wired for sound” and was going to bring the evidence to the District Attorney’s office, yet another lame legal threat to intimidate LeMar, who, by

this point, managed to laugh it off. Reed loved to threaten his broken marks with nonexistent legal action as a last twist of the knife. He claimed that this “evidence” would prove that Landis and “that mean bitch” Clifford, who’d snapped paparazzi shots of Reed leaving the restaurant yelling at him “smile Mr. Reed, you piece of shit” as she squeezed off shots – and LeMar, too, if he didn’t “fill out court papers against Landis” – could be used as proof of assault and battery. LeMar, exercising common sense, hung up.

Months passed with LeMar still seething. Eventually LeMar called Reed demanding his money back. He wanted monthly payments of ... *something* or at least an apology that it didn’t work out. Like any unrepentant criminal, Reed told him to fuck off, that he was insane, and that he had told the district attorney’s office about *him*. Moreover, LeMar owed *him* money, and that he’d consider giving him something “if you fill out a court order against Landis.” There was no fear in Reed’s voice that LeMar would snap at him.

After going through the experience of Joel Reed, losing his computer programmer job, and the death of his domineering mother, Roger LeMar became understandably emotionally overwhelmed and became enmeshed in two relationships that took advantage of his emotional devastation. He finally got an acceptable bachelor pad in a gentrified area of Jersey City, the only normal apartment he had rented in his life.

Curious individuals started keeping house with LeMar. One was a Korean woman living with him who had met in an Oriental health spa that he briefly kept. He referred to her as “a housekeeper that he was dating” and claimed to have met her “at a Korean deli where she was behind the counter.” This relationship screeched to a halt when Michelle warned him, “wait till she wants to move her relatives in for green cards” and “Miss Kim” began demanding that her mother, brother and sister move in. “This is the last straw for me, Bill, the last straw,” LeMar bitterly declared as they both sat in LeMar’s car in front of a local liquor store.

Most curious was the relationship was LeMar had with another man named Roger who Landis dubbed “the bathhouse paratrooper. The only white man to survive an evening at 42nd Street’s New Barracks bathhouse.” LeMar would produce a slight smirk at Landis’ comments, as the duo may have met in a steam room. But LeMar called this rude and ugly troll “a scholar” because he taught at an exclusive parochial high school. The Bathhouse Paratrooper had seemed to be the living incarnation of Dee Dee Ramone’s classic hustler anthem *53rd and 3rd*. Down to the exact creepy “fairy stories” about being “a Green Beret in Vietnam.” Both Rogers would dress in identical Army drag for walks in the park together – a conspicuous display in a macho Latino populated area like Jersey City. In an outburst of generosity, LeMar even bought the Bathhouse Paratrooper a Volkswagen Beetle. The man was so disliked by the students in his school, which grooms them for Ivy League Colleges, that they overturned the Beetle. He must have done something to really irritate the students, because this was far from a rough inner city school where this type of behavior is expected. LeMar had once been a substitute teacher in Jersey City until he lost the gig by physically attacking a student who laughed him off in a hallway. After about a year of living rent-free and the purchase of the gift car, LeMar was fed up with the Bathhouse Paratrooper’s freeloading and gave him his walking papers.

LeMar had always enjoyed reading white supremacist publications like *Instauration* and *Thun derbolt*, as well as sex periodicals like *Screw*, but his political inclinations took a more severe swing. He completely dropped out of the corporate scene after his job was phased out. LeMar became a security guard and survivalist with an arsenal of a gun collection. LeMar truly hated the government in the manner of many survivalists. The weaponry seemed his imagining of an end in a hail of bullets – with him taking some G-men with him.

Curiosities other than the Masonic and secret society bric-a-brac that once dotted LeMar’s apartment began to appear. Most noticeably, a full-headed wig that he rarely wore, perhaps a disguise for wilding gang activity or some form of unthinkable sexual brutality. The wig sat upon a 357 Magnum, a few joints, racial hate magazines, and a curious videotape called “European #27.” Coded videotapes were known for their aberrational content, like the “Color Climax” series that specialized in bestiality. There were also revealing little objects strewn about the bunker like small tubes of KY that can be purchased at adult bookstores catering to quickie booth sex. LeMar once brought out Reed’s Civil War sword for Michelle’s approval. She almost accidentally decapitated him with it.

LeMar had such an arsenal of weaponry that a government worker made a knock to his door. If you are ignorant enough to let one of these types in your home they merely confiscate the illegal weapons. But, in that survivalist way, LeMar knew his constitutional rights to bear arms and that the worker had no search warrant. He told the G-man, who was black, “fuck off, nigger,” and slammed the door in his face. This incident occurred after LeMar, Landis and Michelle had a gun-toting photo fest in LeMar’s back yard, and Michelle had captured a particularly good Oswald-like

stance of LeMar with a blank expression holding a shotgun. “Let’s send it as a postcard to Joel.” LeMar smirked and then declined, “*no*. He’ll call the police.”

LeMar’s survivalist inclinations drew him into a very scary crowd, and he began associating with different flashy, media seeking hate groups. Partly it was still his unfulfilled aspirations about showbiz that led him in their direction. But what was most disquieting is that he seemed to be taking a 360 degree turn from his original stance as a sexual libertine where anything goes and it was peoples’ private business what their preference was, no matter how weird. His most notable association was with “Straight Kids USA,” which would cause disturbances at NAMBLA members’ homes. Straight Kids was a supposed “support group for heterosexuals” (who the hell needs support to be *straight*). In reality Straight Kids USA was a gay bashing arm of an ultra-right wing Christian group. “Help keep a kid straight” was their motto. Not a single kid went near them for their help. The group was operated by a unholy trinity of personalities known for exploding into violence – LeMar, a security guard; Tom McNeil, a livery cabdriver in Brooklyn; and Joe Pilowski, a postal worker who resembled David “Son of Sam” Berkowitz.

LeMar finally got his showbiz aspirations fulfilled when Straight Kids USA were written up (unfavorably) in gay periodicals and when he made a daytime TV appearance with the group on the now defunct Rolanda Watts Show for a free breakfast. The Watts show was part of the phenomenon of hate driven, argumentative American talk shows pre-dating the vileness of Jerry Springer. The group’s cabbie president made a practice of calling the Howard Stern show for additional airplay. The penultimate capture of the Straight Kids USA antics was in the documentary film *Chickenhawk*. However, LeMar was disappointed that in *Chickenhawk* his group was depicted as being as “the equally cracked anti-NAMBLA contingent.”

Bill and Michelle encouraged LeMar to get away from this band of lunatics. “Only a real friend would tell you, Roger,” said Michelle. “Like when you told me I was getting a bit ‘out-there’ when I hung around certain people on Times Square who turned out to be creeps,” chimed in Landis. LeMar’s association with the group came to an abrupt halt when they sent him a threatening Son of Sam style letter, written drunkenly and on amphetamines over a period of days. Bill and Michelle simply reassured him that he could always remind the fellow members that he knew two contributors to the leftist New York publication, *The Village Voice*. The group eventually collapsed when its cabdriver president showed up at the postal worker’s house and dropped dead of a heart attack.

For all LeMar’s white supremacy, the shattering experience of Joel Reed and his other sociopolitical showbiz dabbling, he ended up fleeing his one normal apartment in Jersey City and wound up living on Jersey City’s filthy “Mahtma Ghandi Street,” a street filled with the Pakistanis and East Indians he admittedly loathed. The building was such a fire trap that it eventually burned to the ground. This part of Jersey City, thick with a Muslim population, was a known hiding spot for al-Qaeda operatives since the first attempted bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993. There were so many explosions in the blaze from LeMar’s dum-dum bullets and weapons that the police and fire department had to X-ray and analyze the walls of his burnt out building.

LeMar went into hiding in plain sight. He is currently working at the front desk clerk as clients sign the register and he hands them the key to their lockers at a “men’s fitness spa” called Fox and Kangaroo in suburban New Jersey. In the manner of the certain Times Square adult establishment employees, he slept there until the controversy about his exploding apartment blew over, checking his mail once a week at his burnt out building when he felt his presence is most inconspicuous there. He then got a new studio apartment in an anonymous part of New Jersey.

According to those in the know, Fox and Kangaroo contains certain facilities to appeal to the closeted wrinkle room set. One phone conversation with Landis ended with “I have to go now Bill, I’m registering a 72 year old man.” Landis’ dear friend Jay Hawkins was quite descriptive. Fox and Kangaroo was a chain that even had an outlet in Jay’s city, New Orleans, a legendary gay mecca. “There’s one of those out here Bill and what it consists of is an unused gym with a few barbells laying around as a front for the steam room.” Since LeMar is out of shape (which belies his propensity towards violence and his extensive knowledge of lethal pressure points), it’s no doubt that the place doesn’t cater to musclemen. As Jay aptly put it, “that’s why they want him there representing the place at the front desk.”

LeMar may have been a customer of the spa or had known about it in an adult guidebook. His voice is on the spa’s answering machine, and sounds much like that on his home answering machine. “Fox and Kangaroo Fitness Spa *FOR MEN*. Hours of operation: 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Mondays through Fridays; 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays; 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sundays.” The message ended with the same riff that LeMar has always employed on his home answering machine: “Please leave your messages.” He never sounded so serene in his life.

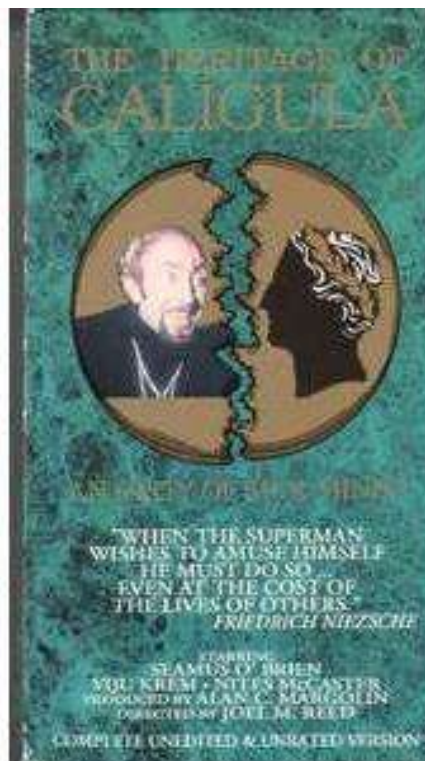
LeMar actually is relieved that he is not in the corporate world and works a blue collar job where he can feel comfortable being himself. He no longer has to put on airs or have the pressure of being in a suit and tie. He is too busy working to be heavily pursuing hate groups. He has gone back more to being his old self, and even visited an Oriental Health Spa recently for some recreational relief. However, the apartment fire and surrounding factors really wiped him out financially and left him heavily in debt.

But as long as someone is thirsty there will be a mirage. To this day, LeMar still believes that Reed “had the skills to be a millionaire. He could have made a cheap movie. But he was a guy who ran from success, because if he did anything successful, he couldn’t con anyone anymore. He’s a guy who makes money off failure. He’s used that review Bill originally wrote of his movie to live on for years. He’s told so many lies in his life to so many different people that he’d have no way of remembering all of them unless he wrote them down on slips of paper.”

Landis also went through some serious life changes that made the experience of Joel Reed look piddling. Still, he managed to keep writing, and revitalized *Sleazoid Express* into a monograph format thanks to his collaborator Michelle Clifford. Landis and Clifford collaborated on the *Sleazoid Express* book for Simon & Schuster.

However, the whole experience of Reed has left Landis a very guarded individual when it comes to showbiz and life in general. If anything, it was a life lesson in the gift of fear. Landis continues to employ the magical currency of favors he learned on the Deuce for self protection. A man of diminutive, anonymous stature, Landis always comes equipped with a hard candy shell of intimidating associates he can call upon in emergencies. He does not easily lend his or the *Sleazoid* name to public events unless they are legitimate museum gigs, paid in advance. Recently Landis was approached by a men’s magazine worker to “make a documentary of the *Sleazoid Express* book” with Landis and Clifford being co-signatories on a Delaware corporation in order to “raise money with investors” and “get people to work for free.” The story sounded like such a familiar retread out of the bad distant past. Landis and Clifford declined this invitation to inevitable trouble.

Like Max Bialystock in *The Producers* selling shares of *Springtime for Hitler*, Reed has wheezed on for the past two decades offering the prospect of producing the sequel to *Bloodsucking Freaks* to any mark he can find. He has worked nerds at the convention circuit, turning up places like Chiller Theater. “When I met Reed,” said one repulsed video duper, “he looked like a pauper. And he was with some young guy who was obsessed with *Bloodsucking Freaks* and said they were producing a sequel...”



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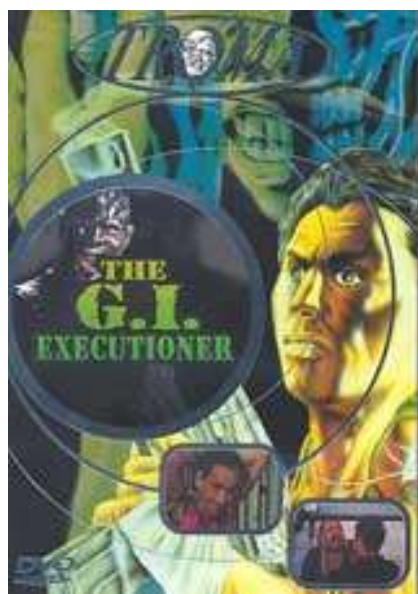
Unbeknownst to Troma, who offers the movie as part of its video collection, Reed shyly sold a copy of the movie to a shady video company called Epix under the two titles *The Heritage of Caligula* and *The Heritage of Caligula: A Collection of Sick Minds*. The boxcover shows a cracked Roman style coin with the image of the protagonist, Sardu. LeMar noticed it at a Jersey City video store in the dollar rental category and fumed.

Reed has entered the electronic age with a website sponsored by his current corporate entity, Socks Incorporated. Socks' website forms an extraordinary tarot deck reflecting Joel Reed's entire being. Socks Inc. is a combo of a movie company through Joel and a specialty sock shop run by another guy who operates a sweatshop. The business is obviously a loss, as no one is going to pay \$20 or more for bizarrely decorated socks. This man is supposedly Joel's new investor since the website's formation in 1995 – although once when asked on the phone about his relationship with Reed, denied there was one at all. Now it is Reed who is listed as owner of the Socks' website at funbureau.com, which lists his home phone number on it offering web design work.

The site offers women to win parts in goofball sounding Troma-like productions; years old announcements of three movies supposedly being made that have never seen the light of day; and an offer to invest which had phony government legalese to gauge if you have hundreds of thousands or millions to give up. At one point the site had extensive summaries of Joel's movies written by him, culled from his yellowed old treatments. Lately he has made a curious turn in downplaying the film synopses and has also added a few years age onto his movies to make them seem even further in the distant past. *Career Bed* and *Sex By Advertisement* are now films hailing from 1966, instead of 1969 or, like in *Screen World*, 1972. Strangely, the summary of his most infamous movie, *Bloodsucking Freaks*, has been reduced to a sentence. PJ Soles has been omitted from the cast listing of *Blood Bath*. *GI Executioner* has a long synopsis which seems even more like Reed's fantasy autobiography, filled with self-deprecating remarks about the hero feeling "like a failure" and permeated with homosexual innuendo. The site even aged *GI Executioner* into a 1967 movie. Perhaps that's when Reed first dreamed it up, but its look and cast members are clearly early 1970s.

Currently Joel is on a full scamming roll again. He is using the internet to search for physical prints of his movies, *Night of the Zombies* and, again, *Blood Bath*, discreetly using the pseudonym "J. Smithe." He is also using a purported biography of him by a nihilist press to appear legitimate and keep his scams chugging full force.

The internet further facilitates Reed's purposeful disinformation, and has made his shell game of retitling movies to mask his paltry output even more. *Night of the Zombies* aka *Gamma 693* is now currently known by five other names: *Battalion of the Living Dead*, *The Chilling*, *Night of the Wehrmacht Zombies*, *Night of the Zombies II*, and *Sister of Death*. He has repeatedly sold it on DVD and video and pocketed the profits. Jamie Gillis, living out in his penurious SRO in San Francisco, has still never seen a cent from these multiple sales. *GI Executioner* and *Bloodsucking Freaks* have even been recognized as cult films in France, a nation obsessed with anything making America look ridiculous, from Jerry Lewis to *Blood Feast* - albeit with unfavorable reviews.



Many of the top players in the New York exploitation world that associated with Reed and knew the ugly truth about him have also passed away, making it even easier for him to pull the wool over investor or writers' eyes. Stan Borden died after multiple strokes and visits to the fat farm. Ava Leighton died of old age. A heavy smoker, Nick Demetroules succumbed to lung cancer.

Look at the corporate structure of Socks Incorporated and the pathetic, mundane position Reed holds in it is revealed. He accepts service of lawsuit papers for the sweatshop owner. And he's some shmuck that has no daily business in the Socks Inc. garment district office, and it's hard to serve legal papers to a target protected in a doorman apartment. Reed has work at Socks' is what's known as lawsuit patsy, the opposite of a process server, one of the lowest ends of freelance courtroom work. And when he's been desperate enough, he's been a process server, handing people lawsuit papers, a job always delegated to the lowest scum of the earth.

Reed's name keeps flying around what's left of the Manhattan exploitation world like a bad gas. He still occasionally shows up on a collector's nickel for horror conventions. Troma co-owner Lloyd Kaufman surprisingly acknowledged in his recent autobiography that *Bloodsucking Freaks* was the sickest movie he ever stumbled across. Most strangely, *Last House on a Dead End Street* director Roger Watkins was given Reed's number when looking for a copy of his own movie. Reed had no idea about Watkins' background in pornography, or that he had made a major horror classic, and started bragging that, "I'm 60 [Reed's actual age is closer to 71]. I go around NYU film school, tell these girls I'm a director and they all want to fuck me. Now, do *you* want to invest in one of my movies?"

Reed's mentor, Joe Sarno, has moved on to cultivate academicians who collect exploitation people like butterflies. A dishonest director who used Reed and taught him the tricks of the trade because Reed had the balls to carry off the lies and keep Sarno's reputation clean. Sarno currently appears at institutions like NYU to give the appearance of being a cinematic innovator capable of doing movies on shoestring budgets. For this crowd Sarno hides all the gross stories he'd gladly tell sheet sniffing collectors or investors. Like about how Sarno knew Chuck Traynor and Linda Lovelace before they were famous in Miami and "Chuck would bring Linda over to give me these, uh, demonstrations," he'd leer out of his mouth, distorted by an injury in the Korean War. Revealing what a sexual pig he was personally as well as his inclination to hire pimped off woman.

We're surprised Sir Joel Reed hasn't been invited to any of these symposiums for the exploitation academician... yet. But people still fork over money to Reed. Including Chris Stein of Blondie, who was wooed with a spaghetti dinner. Some people pay to meet him just for the experience of meeting an infamous creep.

If any readers want to invest with Joel M. Reed, he's in the Manhattan White Pages.

Reed could have picked other ways to rob people and he picked the medium of exploitation film. Movies are dreams come to life. Reed is a dream-killer and is proud that he's been able to get over on so many people for so long, with the sociopath's coldness about not caring how or how many people he's damaged to feather his nest. Joel M. Reed is about as entertaining as a colostomy bag. The only thing authentic about Reed is that he's completely evil.

Names of some private individuals have been changed to protect anonymity. Names of all exploitation film players are real. The events depicted in this story are all true according to the writers' actual personal experiences.

Act III: Going Fishing

Potential Investor Harold Fine, Jr. contacts Joel M. Reed via the Web

Subj:	For Mr. Joel M. Reed from Mr. Harold Fine
Date:	8/6/02 2:29:44 PM Eastern Daylight Time
From:	Haroldfinejr@aol.com
To:	admin@funbureau.com

Dear Mr. Reed,

I am a retiree in West Palm, Fla. I have always dreamed about being in the exciting world of movies. I rented your film Bloodsucking Freaks and thought it was a real humdinger. After the way the market has gone I have recently taken some stocks out and would rather use the funds to put into a film production and have something to show for it.

I feel it is a better investment with the way Wall Street is going.

Now, while I do not have a half million to gamble with I do have fifty thousand.

I am a recent widower and I feel investing in a film would maybe brighten my spirits. Maybe I could even meet a few young starlets (wink!)

Now, what say you about the odds of this investment - and what films are you looking to make? Would I get the bill of producer? What kind of contacts do you have in the film business?

I know nothing about the film business except the enjoyment it has given me in theaters. Besides the occasional trip to Vegas and playing the ponies here locally at the track, movies have become a new pasttime since the passing of my wife. I read your website and you have quite an impressive resume!

Hoping to hear from you soon. Have a cheerful day!

Sincerely,
Harold Fine, Jr.

Subj:	Re: Movie
Date:	8/6/02 4:02:13 PM Eastern Daylight Time
From:	jreed@nyc.rr.com (Joel Reed)
To:	HaroldfineJr@aol.com

I am looking for a partner-investor who would actively involve himself in some projects.

I've done well with all my films. The secrete [*sic*] is giving the public something that they want. I have a big following which should insure a return of investment through DVD and subsidiary rights alone with the possibility of a windfall through theatrical release.

I have a couple of projects in developments including "Bloodsucking Freaks II." Most of my scripts are genre as you can spend multiples of \$50,000 just trying to package a major film and never have it made.

My phone number is 212 245-6980. My cell is 917 817 3049. Let's talk and limit yourself to at least three young girls a day.

Subj:	Re: Movie questions
Date:	8/7/02 2:19:17 AM Eastern Daylight Time

From:	Haroldfinejr@aol.com
To:	jreed@nyc.rr.com (Joel Reed)

In a message dated 8/6/02 4:02:13 PM Eastern Daylight Time, jreed@nyc.rr.com writes:

I am looking for a partner-investor who would actively involve himself in some projects.

I don't really know anything about making films. I would have to leave that to you.

I have a big following which should insure a return of investment through DVD and subsidiary rights alone with the possibility of a windfall through theatrical release.

Could you please go into more detail here?

I have a couple of projects in developments including "Bloodsucking Freaks II." Most of my scripts are genre as you can spend multiples of \$50,000 just trying to package a major film and never have it made.

So is my 50 grand just not enough? What are you saying when you say you can spend multiples and never have it made?

I would call you but I am partially deaf and it is much easier to work through this computer here that my daughter has arranged for me and taught me to use. It is a real luxury. If it becomes a possibility of working together I would gladly travel to meet in person. Sounds exciting. But as you say maybe my available capital isn't enough.

**Best Regards,
HF, jr.**

Subj:	Movie
Date:	8/7/02 11:44:31 AM Eastern Daylight Time
From:	jreed@nyc.rr.com (Joel Reed)
To:	Haroldfinejr@aol.com

I'm sorry to somewhat confuse you with my last email.

1. I don't really know anything about making films. I would have to leave that to you

You did in your letter hint at some active participation.

2. Could you please go into more detail here?

If, in a worse case scenario we forgo debuting the film(s) in a theater and go directly to DVD and VHS. I have many cult fans who will buy such directly from my web site eliminating the cost of a distributor and/or retailer. "HeadPress" a prominent cult film magazine is publishing my biography in the fall and expects extremely good sales. A search of my name on the Internet and among news groups (Google.com) will turn up thousands of references to my movies and other work.

3. So is my 50 grand just not enough? What are you saying when you say you can spend multiples and never have it made?

I just wanted to illustrate the fact the \$50,000 invested in a major movie is merely a drop in the bucket and would barely cover option cost of the script. With my type of film it gets a lot more done. In any case your \$50,000 would be used to develop a package of three genre films, a web site, and promotion there of. The films would be produced at a cost of \$500,000 each obtainable from foreign pre-sales and other investors.. Your initial investment would be paid back from the production budgets prior to first day of principal photography and you would retain a 20% profit participation in the entire project. In this way your risk is not dependant entirely on the success of the films.

I would appreciate a phone number and address and a little more about yourself. (I am not running a high pitched phone sales operation and I will not call except in the utmost emergency.)

Subj:	Re: ps
Date:	8/8/02 6:46:17 PM Eastern Daylight Time
From:	Haroldfinejr@aol.com
To:	jreed@nyc.rr.com (Joel Reed)

Dear Mr. Reed,

I am also curious - exactly how many films have you made and when was the last film you made released?

Am I mistaken, but is the name "Jamie Gillis" in your film Night of the Zombies the X-rated actor (I can only hope!!!)

About the foreign investors: where exactly are they located?

**Sincerely,
Harold Fine JS.**

Subj:	Re: Movie
Date:	8/8/02 7:43:20 PM Eastern Daylight Time
From:	jreed@nyc.rr.com (Joel Reed)
To:	Haroldfinejr@aol.com

At 06:38 PM 8/8/02 -0400, you wrote:

Dear Mr. Reed,

I am even more confused now. I contacted "Headpress" and they informed me there was no such biography planned. That it had been dropped.

It's news to me. I emailed the author. It's has taken him three years and a lot of my time.

That I am not so much concerned about. It is the DVD situation. My investment counselor is telling me to be cautious, but he is an old fuddy duddy. He did raise a valid point. Are the profits net or gross?

Your investment counselor speaks the truth. Any investment is riskier and entertainment much more so. The profits are both net and gross. The whole idea of the fall back to digital and foreign is to exclude the high cost of theatrical distribution. The picture or pictures could earn millions at the box office and return zero net profits. (As many major pictures have with resulting law suites.) If we distribute the picture electronically ourselves the overhead will be minimal resulting in larger gross profits.)

Is there anyone I could speak with who you have worked with? References? I am raring to go, to immerse myself in film production, but my counselor did suggest I communicate with some people you have worked with in the past.

I have a long list. However - I would like some information on yourself before I disclose them.

And with my participation I was seeking - perhaps screen tests in which I would meet some attractive young ladies.

I will be sitting right next to you.

More to follow!

**Yours in future filmmaking,
Harold Fine Jr.**

Subj:	Re: pps
Date:	8/8/02 8:03:03 PM Eastern Daylight Time
From:	<i>jreed@nyc.rr.com (Joel Reed)</i>
To:	Haroldfinejr@aol.com

At 06:48 PM 8/8/02 -0400, you wrote:

To: *jreed@nyc.rr.com (Joel Reed)* Subject: Re: Book
What???

I can assure you that I've been working (although on and off-- life is like that) on this book for three years now. And David at Headpress has always been supportive and encouraging to me. The book is not off. In fact, I just got word from David that I could start looking for foreign adverts/posters for your films (naming Critical Vision/Headpress as the publisher) for use in the finished thing by inquiring on message boards. We're going to announce a street date for the book ASAP (that is, as soon as it's been reviewed by you and gone through the entire galley proof process--shouldn't be long now). In fact, I'm going over things right now. As far as anyone knowing about the book-- Well, the only people who know that it's being written are personal friends or those involved in the interviews. I know the information has not been released to the public yet... one of the reasons why I asked David if it was OK to name his press as the source of publication in my search for more images. His response (as of 8/5/02):

Hi XXXX,

Yes, sure, you can announce the Reed book and Headpress/Critical Vision as the publisher in order to scout out images. I'll make a formal announcement when we have a date fixed for publication.

Cheers,

David

Subj:	Re: pps
Date:	8/8/02 6:48:50 PM Eastern Daylight Time
From:	Haroldfinejr@aol.com
To:	<i>jreed@nyc.rr.com (Joel Reed)</i>

**Mr. Reed- you mentioned investors and this piqued my imagination.
There are quite a few other fellows I meet at the track who have some cash to throw around.
What do you think?
Anxious to get things going.**

Harold

Subj:	Re: pps
Date:	8/8/02 8:01:45 PM Eastern Daylight Time
From:	<i>jreed@nyc.rr.com (Joel Reed)</i>
To:	Haroldfinejr@aol.com

At 06:48 PM 8/8/02 -0400, you wrote:

**Mr. Reed - you mentioned investors and this piqued my imagination.
There are quite a few other fellows I meet at the track who have some cash to throw around.
What do you think?
Anxious to get things going.**

Of course! Then you would be the full producer and participate to the nth degree. Many of the producers I worked with had much less knowledge of the movies than you do now. (You can take out all the young actresses to dinner to discuss the problems they're having with me.)

In any case you have a wonderful command of the English language. (I've only been three times. Each time I was with owners who had skinny horses with thin legs that they paid millions for. I bet on the long shots and won each time. My host's didn't so well. I bet on a horse at Sandsdown in England because the jockey's name was J. Reed. I made a pile.)

Subj:	Re: ps
Date:	8/8/02 7:51:37 PM Eastern Daylight Time
From:	jreed@nyc.rr.com (Joel Reed)
To:	Haroldfinejr@aol.com

At 06:46 PM 8/8/02 -0400, you wrote:

Dear Mr. Reed,

I am also curious - exactly how many films have you made and when was the last film you made released?

I list of my films can be found on the Internet Movies database or funbureau.com I haven't made any films is years as I was busy writing books and then got successful in the web business. I made about 7 films - but participate in many others. During a stint at MGM I was involved with many big pictures in various capacities and got to know a lot of the stars.

Am I mistaken, but is the name "Jamie Gillis" in your film Night of the Zombies the X-rated actor (I can only hope!!!)

Yes, it is the one and the same. I still here from him and others of that era. I also know Ron Jeremy. I never made a porn picture but friends of mine have and I was on the set of many unfortunately the only time I volunteered to appear on screen, the newly discovered leading lady was that delectable, I was nixed by Gerald Daimaino [sic] the director even though the guy playing opposite her couldn't function.

About the foreign investors: where exactly are they located?

I wasn't referring to foreign investors but foreign distributors who would buy the rights to their territory.

MORE!

Subj:	Re: hello
Date:	8/12/02 10:23:36 AM Eastern Daylight Time
From:	jreed@nyc.rr.com (Joel Reed)
To:	HaroldfineJS@aol.com

Still waiting for some information on yourself? Do you consider yourself an [sic] sophisticated investor.

**At 08:46 PM 8/11/02 -0400, you wrote:
Mr. Reed,**

I've been to the track this weekend and am scouting around to see if any other pony players are as enthused as me about film production.

I shall be in touch soon.

Yours,
Harold

***Act IV: Michelle Clifford Interviews Joel M. Reed Via E-mail
On Jamie Gillis's Starring Role in Night of the Zombies***

MC: Thanks for your time. Here are some questions. It might be easiest for you to type in the answers after the questions and send it back to me whenever you've finished. More than a few questions, I know, but I place a high value on accuracy. Mr. Reed, whatever thoughts you can share on these questions will be most appreciated. You are virtually the only director of mainstream cinema who has worked with Gillis and used him as a leading man. And in a stroke of genius used him as a lead in an action suspense capacity. I would like to document this.

MC: How did you meet Jamie Gillis and what year was this?

JR: When I was casting "Bloodsucking Freaks". I don't remember the year. The same when the film was made.

MC: How did you wind up casting him? Before the filming, what was your thought on the "baggage" i.e. X films reputation that he would be bringing to the film?

JR: It was of no concern.

MC: Did you think he had many fans, and that the fan base was enough to pull in a significant audience?

JR: Didn't want his fan base.

MC: Was casting him your decision or were there other producers or such that came to the decision together?

JR: My decision.

MC: How was Gillis in dealing with the rest of the cast?

JR: Wonderful, easygoing guy.

MC: How did he take direction? Were you happy with the performance he gave in the film?

JR: Yes!

MC: How did he relate to being in Germany? Any good stories from the set?

JR: We had a good time socializing along with Gael Green who knew some great restaurants.

MC: Did you spend any off time together? What was Gillis' overall personality like at the time?

JR: As I said, great personality.

MC: Since this was in the swinging 70's, how do you feel the era was reflected within him?

JR: No! He was rather conservative in person.

MC: Did the food critic Gael Greene accompany the crew on the filming in Germany? What did their relationship seem like to you?

JR: They were having an affair.

MC: You mentioned the name Chris McCleod, isn't she an X actress as well who goes by the name of Juliet Graham?

JR: I wouldn't know. I don't bother with X people.

MC: Was he seeing McCleod at the same time as Greene? (I am not seeking interviews with women Gillis has dated. They tend to be a guarded, loyal bunch that isn't really going to tell the truth about something like that. Many women deny knowing him. Also, it's funnier to hear a man's perspective.)

JR: I haven't got a time line.

MC: What were your expectations for the film? And how did it turn out? How was its distribution?

JR: Never expected anything for the film. There were problems with the producer. It could have been much better if I had more confidence in myself.

MC: Who distributed the film?

JR: Nick Demetroules at first. Jerry Gross's former partner.

MC: Did the name Gillis in the credits affect the distribution?

JR: Meant nothing either way.

MC: Did Gillis give you any feedback on what he thought of the finished film, and/or his performance in it?

JR: Can't recall. Didn't run into him until years later.

MC: Did the film have a premier? At what theatre? What was the date if you know approximately?

JR: Don't remember. But it played all over. It did very well in Germany.

MC: Did you stay friendly with Gillis after the completion of the film?

JR: Ran into him years later. We weren't close friends. Jamie had more than one lead in a major picture maybe with Burt Reynolds or Shaft. I think he played a pimp in one that I went to see. He was also in Broadway and off-Broadway productions. As you know he is highly educated, Columbia University, I think, and a perfect gentleman at all times. I know that he was quite persistent with women. I never saw him in any porn films. I don't like them.

MC: Thank you very, very much for your time.

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Joel M. Reed